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THE

WINDSOR MAGAZINE

AN ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY

FOR

MEN AND WOMEN

VOL. XVII

DECEMBER 1902 *TO MAY* 1903

LONDON
WARD, LOCK & CO., LIMITED
WARWICK HOUSE, SALISBURY SQUARE, E.C.
1903

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PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,
DUKE STREET, STAMFORD STREET, S.E., AND GREAT WINDMILL STREET, W.

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		PAGE
ADELER, MAX. "Frictional Electricity"		57
AFTER THE RUN	*Edgar Lander*	567
AN ARISTOCRATIC SOCIALIST. Illustrated by T. Walter Wilson, R.I.	*E. Phillips Oppenheim*	196
AN EASTER HYMN	From a picture by *Walther Firle*	572
AN EPILOGUE	*Charlotte Becker*	256
AN EXCEPTION	*Madeline Bridges*	804
AN OLD RHYME REPICTURED	*Harold Percival*	714
ANGLER'S BATTLE ROYAL, THE. Illustrated by the Author	*Charles F. W. Mielatz*	765
ARNOLD, SIR EDWIN. "The Viceregal Rule of India"		275
"AT CHRISTMAS BE MERRY"	*A. L. Bowley*	49
AT THE GALLERY STAIRS	*Bertha Newcombe*	56
AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A WILD RABBIT, THE. Illustrated by A. T. Forrest	*S. L. Bensusan*	249
AVENUE, MIDDLEHARNIS, HOLLAND, THE	*Hobbema*	369
BADGE OF HONOUR, THE	*Gunning King*	329
BADLY EXPRESSED	*Frank Wright*	450
BARING-GOULD, S. "Margery Coade"		137
BENSON, E. F. "A Double Misfit"		291
BENSUSAN, S. L. "The Remarkable Tombstones of Milan"		167
"The Autobiography of a Wild Rabbit"		249
"BIRDS ARE 'HEALTHY' THIS YEAR"	*E. S. Hodgson*	208
BIRTHPLACE OF COLUMBUS, THE. Illustrated from photographs and drawings	*Miller Christy*	431
BLACK ISLE, THE. Illustrated from photographs	*Henry Harbour*	527
BLIND. Illustrated by Oscar Wilson	*Fred M. White*	174
BOXING HORSES. Illustrated from photographs	*H. J. Holmes*	287
BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY, THE. Illustrated from photographs	*Flora Klickmann*	606
BRYCE, RT. HON. JAMES. "The Powers of the Crown in England"		33
BY THE BLACK DEEP. Illustrated by A. Forestier	*R. Austin Freeman and Ashdown Piers*	677
CHEESE INDUSTRY OF THE LOWLANDS, THE. Illustrated by A. T. Forrest	*S. R. Lewison*	787
CHILD VERSES. Illustrated by E. Franklin Betts.	*Josephine D. Daskam*	117
CHILDREN'S LIBRARIES IN AMERICA. Illustrated from photographs	*C. O'Conor Eccles*	723
CHRISTMAS PARTY, THE	*Hilda Cowham*	206
CHURCHILL, WINSTON SPENCER. "On the Flank of the Army"		453
CLARIONET PLAYER, THE. Illustrated by Maurice Greiffenhagen	*Beatrice Harraden*	28
CLARKE, B.A. "A Favourite of Fortune"		793
"The Pretenders"		63
"The Voice of the Turtle"		531
CONTINENT IN SPOONS, A. Illustrated from photographs	*C. Lang Neil*	487
CROCKETT, S. R. "Strong Mac"	79, 233, 386, 493, 587,	744
"CUP THAT CHEERS, BUT NOT INEBRIATES, THE"	*Louis Wain*	448
CUPID AND THE PAINT-BRUSH	*P. G. Wodehouse*	687
DAVIS, LUCIEN. "The Arrival"		332
"The New Year Party"		310
DISCOVERY OF LONDON, THE. Illustrated by Will Owen	*G. H. Boden*	363
DOUBLE MISFIT, A. Illustrated by W. J. Hurlbut	*E. F. Benson*	291
DOUBTFUL MOMENT, A.	*Alfred Strutt*	152
EASY COME. Illustrated by Gunning King	*W. Pett Ridge*	146
EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK, THE	205, 327, 447, 567, 687,	801
ELEGY ON THE SAD DEATH OF ROSALIE	*C. H. St. L. Russell*	205
ENCOURAGING	*E. Fairhurst*	688
ENGLISH PEERS WHO ARE FOREIGN PRINCES. Illustrated	*J. M. Bulloch*	693

Digitized by Google

177158

		PAGE
FARMER'S DAUGHTER, THE	*Montagu Barstow*	659
FAVOURITE OF FORTUNE, A. Illustrated by Harold Copping	*B. A. Clarke*	793
FIFTH STRING, THE. Illustrated by Howard Chandler Christy	*John Philip Sousa*	333
FOOL IN HIS FOLLY, A. Illustrated by Harold Copping	*E. E. Kellett*	411
FRASER, J. MALCOLM, AND B. FLETCHER ROBINSON. "The Trail of the Dead"		121, 264, 370, 477, 627, 734
FRICTIONAL ELECTRICITY. Illustrated by Will Owen	*Max Adeler*	57
FRONTISPIECES. "An Easter Hymn." From a picture by Walther Firle		572
"Clematis." From a painting by Norman Hirst		212
"Devotion." From a painting by Henry Ryland, R.I.		2
"Faces in the Fire." From a picture by Marcella Walker		452
"Spring." From a painting by Paul Thumann		692
"The Arrival." From a picture by Lucien Davis, R.I.		332
GREIFFENHAGEN, MAURICE. Illustrations to "The Clarionet Player"		28
" "Strong Mac"		79, 233, 386, 493, 587, 744
GUILTY CONSCIENCE, A	*B. Boese*	739
HAGGARD, H. RIDER. "Lost on the Veld"		185
HAMILTON, COSMO. "Mr. Rackett's Queen Elizabeth"		257
HARRADEN, BEATRICE. "The Clarionet Player"		28
HERING, HENRY A. "Marmaduke Dulcimer, Codicil-Forger"		515
HOLMES, H. J. "A Pocket Burrow"		153
"Boxing Horses"		287
HOMEWARD BOUND FOR CHRISTMAS IN THE COACHING DAYS	*Fred W. Burton*	145
HOTWELLS DUEL, THE. Illustrated by Hugh M. Satows	*"Q"*	213
HYGIENIC YOUNG MAN, THE	*Di Watt*	327
"I WONDER!"	*Beatrice Offor*	617
IN THE POWER OF THE BRIGANDS. Illustrated by Fred Pegram	*J. P. Setoun*	622
INDUSTRIAL REAWAKENING OF SOUTH AFRICA, THE. Illustrated from photographs	*Neville Edwards*	420
INEXPLICABLE	*A. Wallis Mills*	687
IRVING, SIR HENRY. "The Study of Shakespeare in Small Communities"		100
IT ALL DEPENDS	*Will Greff*	689
JALLAND, G. H. Illustrations to "Steam Tactics"		3
"The Obvious Inference"		447
JOURNEY BY THE WAY OF THE PHILISTINES, A. Illustrated from photographs and sketches	*Mrs. Gray Hill*	461
JUG OF CIDER, A	*Jessie Pope*	801
KELLETT, E. E. "A Fool in his Folly"		411
KING'S WAY, THE. Illustrated by Allan Stewart	*H. C. Bailey*	159
KIPLING, RUDYARD. "Steam Tactics"		3
KIT-BAG, THE. Illustrated by T. Walter Wilson, R.I.	*Richard Marsh*	298
KLICKMANN, FLORA. "The British and Foreign Bible Society"		606
LATEST SCIENTIFIC MARVEL, THE	*Harold White*	567
LATEST, THE	*Howard Somerville*	569
L'ENFANT TERRIBLE	*A. Wallis Mills*	327
LESSON, THE	*R. Anning Bell*	526
LITTLE BROWN BOY, THE. Illustrated by Oscar Wilson	*L. G. Moberly*	647
LITTLE KNOWLEDGE——, A	*Hilda Cowham*	330
'LIZA OF LAMBETH LOQUITUR	*Edgar Lander*	210
LOCH LOMOND IN SUMMER AND WINTER. Illustrated from photographs	*James Strang*	667
LOST ON THE VELD. Illustrated by G. Montbard	*H. Rider Haggard*	185
LOVER, THE GIRL, AND THE ONLOOKER, THE. Illustrated by Fred Pegram	*E. Nesbit*	93
LOVERS ON AN ISLAND. Illustrated by John Cameron	*Barry Pain*	573
MACLAREN, IAN. "Unsolved." Illustrated by F. H. Townsend		40, 319, 438, 545, 660, 705
MAN OF DUTY, THE	*Harold White*	447
MAN WHO SAVED THE PRESIDENT'S LIFE, THE. Illustrated by Oscar Wilson	*E. Phillips Oppenheim*	715
MAN'S DENSITY	*Lillian Heuert*	449
MARGERY COADE. Illustrated by F. H. Townsend	*S. Baring-Gould*	137
MARMADUKE DULCIMER, CODICIL-FORGER. Illustrated by T. Walter Wilson, R.I.	*Henry A. Hering*	515
MISS ROBINSON'S FUR NECKLET	*A. Wallis Mills*	449
MODERN DUTCH ART AND ARTISTS. Illustrations from their work	*S. R. Lewison*	220
MODESTY	*Val Norton*	450
MR. RACKETT'S QUEEN ELIZABETH. Illustrated by Will Owen	*Cosmo Hamilton*	257

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		PAGE
NEIGHBOURLY CONSIDERATION	*A. J. Finberg*	802
NEW STORY, THE	*Harold White*	328
NEW YEAR PARTY, THE	*Lucien Davis, R.I.*	310
NEWCOMBE, BERTHA. "At the Gallery Stairs"		56
"NO TIME FOR READING." Illustrated from a portrait	*Andrew Lang*	284
OBVIOUS INFERENCE, THE	*G. H. Jalland*	447
ODD CORNERS OF MUSICAL VIENNA. Illustrated from photographs	*T. Boughton-Wilby*	580
ON THE FLANK OF THE ARMY. Illustrated by G. Montbard.	*Winston Spencer Churchill, M.P.*	453
ONLY WAY, THE	*Phil Ebbutt*	210, 689
OPPENHEIM, E. PHILLIPS. "An Aristocratic Socialist"		196
"The Man who Saved the President's Life"		715
ORPHEUS	*A. Bauerle*	410
OTHER LATEST, THE	*Howard Somerville*	569
OWEN, WILL. Illustrations to "Frictional Electricity"		57
" "Mr. Rackett's Queen Elizabeth"		257
" "The Discovery of London"		363
OWL, THE. Illustrated from photographs and a drawing	*R. B. Lodge*	72
PELOTA: THE NATIONAL GAME OF THE BASQUES. Illustrated from photographs	*Henry Vivian*	472
PETER BRADY, MILLIONAIRE. Illustrated by Oscar Wilson	*Oscar Parker*	560
PETT RIDGE, W. "Easy Come"		146
PIANO-PLAYING EXTRAORDINARY. Illustrated from photographs	*Frank Holmfield*	761
PICTURE OF THE YEAR, THE. Illustrated by A. Wallis Mills	*Harold White*	773
PNEUMATIC FISHES. Illustrated by the Author	*Edward Step, F.L.S.*	618
POCKET BURROW, A. Illustrated from photographs	*H. J. Holmes*	153
POETRY. "A Ballade of Protest"	*Theodosia Harrison*	646
"A Woman"	*Charles Hanson Towne*	194
"Allurement"	*Margaret Steele Anderson*	704
"An Epilogue"	*Charlotte Becker*	256
"Daffodils in the Strand"	*Agnes Grozier Herbertson*	460
"Fires in the Clearing"	*Duncan Campbell Scott*	514
"How Did You Die?"	*Edmund Vance Cooke*	626
"In a Far Country"	*Arthur Ketchum*	48
"My Pretty Child"	*Dora Sigerson*	418
"Old Songs"	*Sara Beaumont Kennedy*	476
"Solace"	*Joan Burleigh*	219
"Still there is Strength"	*Theodore Roberts*	713
"The Artist Maid"	*Roderick Gill*	786
"The Grass"	*John Vance Cheney*	385
"The Heart and the Soul"	*Howel Scratton*	675
"The Lights o' Home"	*Arthur Ketchum*	800
"The Magic Flute"	*Rosamund Marriott Watson*	743
"The Night Rider"	*Fullerton L. Waldo*	99
"The Point of View"	*Margaret Prescott Montague*	507
"The Rain"	*Dora Sigerson*	598
"The Silence"	*Arthur Ketchum*	579
"The Turn of the Tide"	*Thornton Sherburne Hardy*	616
"The Victory"	*Cale Young Rice*	437
"To a Friend"	*Jessie Pope*	698
"Triunity"	*Ursula Arnold*	379
"Two"	*Katie Whiting Patch*	136
"Two Roses"	*M. Hedderwick Browne*	686
"White Birches"	*Rosalie Arthur*	586
"Work"	*Margaret Steele Anderson*	566
POINT OF PEDIGREE, A	*Gilbert James*	804
POSSESSIVE PRONOUN, THE	*R. Simkin*	205
POWERS OF THE CROWN IN ENGLAND, THE. Illustrated from contemporary pictures	*Rt. Hon. James Bryce, M.P.*	33
PRESENTING A NEW-COMER	*L. Alvarez*	419
PRETENDERS, THE. Illustrated by Harold Copping	*B. A. Clarke*	63
PROMISE OF IMPROVEMENT, A	*Arthur Gill*	802
"Q." "The Hotwells Duel"		213
QUESTION OF TERMS, A	*Howard Somerville*	207
REMARKABLE TOMBSTONES OF MILAN, THE. Illustrated from photographs	*S. L. Bensusan*	167
ROBINSON, B. FLETCHER, AND J. MALCOLM FRASER. "The Trail of the Dead"		121, 264, 370, 477, 627, 734
ROMANCE OF SALVAGE ENGINEERING, THE. Illustrated from photographs	*John M. Carlisle*	539

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		PAGE
SALEM JONES, SHEPHERD. Illustrated from photographs and pictures	*J. J. Britton*	553
SOLOMON J. SOLOMON AND HIS WORK. Illustrated from his pictures		18
SOME FOUR-HANDED FOLK. Illustrated from photographs	*Gambier Bolton, F.Z.S.*	403
SOUSA, JOHN PHILIP. "The Fifth String"		333
SPANISH BEAUTY, A	*James Casado*	676
SPIRIT OF WINTER, THE	*Beatrice Offor*	71
STEAM TACTICS. Illustrated by G. H. Jalland	*Rudyard Kipling*	3
STRONG MAC. Illustrated by Maurice Greiffenhagen	*S. R. Crockett*	79, 233, 386, 493, 587, 744
STUDY OF SHAKESPEARE IN SMALL COMMUNITIES, THE. Illustrated from famous artists' pictures and from photographs	*Sir Henry Irving*	100
SUNDAY MORNING	*Charles Pears*	803
TARPON, THE TAKING OF THE. Illustrated by the Author	*Charles F. W. Mielatz*	765
TESTING OF FARM AND FLOWER SEEDS, THE. Illustrated from photographs	*W. G. FitzGerald*	355
THIEDE, ADOLF. Illustrations to "The Trail of the Dead"		121, 264, 370, 477, 627, 734
TO THE RESCUE!	*Fred W. Burton*	195
TOILETTE LESSON, THE	*B. Boese*	732
TOO BAD!	*Frank Styche*	328
TOWNSEND, F. H. Illustrations to "Unsolved"		40, 319, 438, 545, 660, 705
TRAIL OF THE DEAD, THE—		
I.—"The Hairy Caterpillar"	*B. Fletcher Robinson and J. Malcolm Fraser*	121
II.—"The Mystery of the Lemsdorf Ham"	" " " " "	264
III.—"The Chase in the Snow"	" " " " "	370
IV.—"The Anonymous Article"	" " " " "	477
V.—"The Ammonia Cylinder"	" " " " "	627
VI.—"The End of the Trail"	" " " " "	734
TRIAL BY PHRENOLOGY	*Harold White*	205
TRYST, THE	*St. Clair Simmons*	446
UNANSWERABLE RETORT, THE	*Berte Livett*	690
UNSOLVED. I.—"The Clash of Dishes"	*Ian Maclaren*	40
II.—"An Unhistorical Tragedy"	" "	319
III.—"An Unseen Presence"	" "	438
IV.—"The Spirit of the Place"	" "	545
V.—"Ghostly Counsel"	" "	660
VI.—"The Hand on the Blind"	" "	705
VANISHING OF MAJOR VAUGHAN, THE. Illustrated by Oscar Wilson	*Weatherby Chesney*	111
VICEREGAL RULE OF INDIA, THE. Illustrated from portraits and pictures	*Sir Edwin Arnold, K.C.I.E., C.S.I.*	275
VOICE OF THE TURTLE, THE. Illustrated by Harold Copping	*B. A. Clarke*	531
WASTE OF PUBLIC MONEY, THE—		
I.—Introductory	*Ernest E. Williams*	130
II.—"The Remount Scandals"	" "	311
III.—"Cordite and Expensive Favouritism"	" "	380
IV.—"Stationery and Printing"	" "	508
V.—"Royal Commissions and Pensions"	" "	652
VI.—"The Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service"	" "	780
WAX-WORKS AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY, THE. Illustrated from photographs	*T. Sidney Allnutt*	689
"WHAT OUR AMATEURS HAVE TO FACE"	*Spencer Pryse*	209
WHAT OUR ASTRONOMERS MUST ENDURE	*S. W. Cavenagh*	568
WHITE, FRED M. "Blind"		174
WILL O' THE WISP, THE	*H. M. Bennett*	309
WILLIAMS, ERNEST E. "The Waste of Public Money"		130, 311, 380, 508, 652, 780
WOMAN THE CONSIDERATE	*A. Wallis Mills*	801
WRESTLING. Illustrated from photographs	*George Hackenschmidt*	50

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STEAM TACTICS.

By RUDYARD KIPLING.*

"To P. O. Emanuel Pyecroft,
"Cape Station: H.M.S. *Postulant*.

"Dear Pyecroft,—This should reach you about the time you turn over to the *Hierophant* at Zanzibar, and I hope finds you as fit as when we parted.

"I always thought, as you said three years ago, that it would be a sin and a shame not to make a story out of some of the things that have happened between you and Hinchcliff and me, every time we met.

"Now I have written out some of the tales. Of course, I ought to have stuck to what I knew would go down quietly; but one thing leading to another, I put it all in, and it made six Number One tales. I put in about the reply-telegram at Wool—when you and Cordery tried to help the dumb girl with the pig; I put in about the Plymouth baby—the night after the *Belligerent* paid off; and I put in about Portland Station and the Captain, and the penny-piece which we saw. Nevertheless, when it was all done, a man that I can trust in the literary line said that, to go down at all, those three last numbers would have to be translated into French; and he recommended me to hand them over to a captain in the French Navy called Loti. I did not care to accede to this, so I took them out and laid them by till happier times, and now people will never know what they have lost. However, enough residuum remains to amuse, if not to instruct; and I can always put the rest into a large, fine book.

"Hinchcliff had the *Djinn* at the Coronation Review. I met him on the beach afterwards, and I got him to check the story of our trips in the motors. He said he could guarantee your being agreeable to it, if I cut out all about what happened on the Cramberhurst Road, as it would hurt Agg's feelings. I know, from what you said at the time, that you didn't care about Agg's feelings; so I suppose Hinchcliff and Agg have made it up.

"The other two tales you checked yourself, *viva voce*, before last Manœuvres; but I put some more to them on my own later, and it is very likely that I have not got all the Navy *minutiæ* quite right. About Antonio, you were not then in a condition to be accurate all through; and about No. 267, I was then in strange surroundings and rather excited myself. Therefore there may be much that is not technically true; but Hinchcliff says I have got the spirit all correct. You will see, as these stories come out, the care that I have taken to disguise your name and rating, and everything else that might reflect upon you. Unless you care to give yourself away, which I have never known you do yet, detection is quite impossible for you or Hinchcliff. Hence I am writing freely, and though accused of extravaganzas by some people, can rest confident that there is much more in these literary efforts of mine than meets the casual eye.

"Yours as before,
"Rudyard Kipling.

"P.S.—Since writing the above there has been a hitch about the Antonio tale and the proceedings of No. 267; it being freely alleged that Antonio won't go down, because it is a bit too thick (this shows how much people know), and 267 would be subversive to discipline, as well as likely to annoy admirals. Consequently I have had to begin at the wrong end—with the motor trips—which is about the same as securing arms at the beginning of G. Q.'s, if I am right in my technical inferences. Both you and Hinchcliff will thus suffer from being presented to the public manœuvring upon the land, which is not your natural element, instead of upon the sea, which is. I, being an author, am not supposed to have any feelings."

* * * * *

I caught sight of their faces as we came up behind the cart in the narrow Sussex lane; but though it was not eleven o'clock, they were both asleep.

That the carrier was on the wrong side of

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the road made no difference to his language when I rang my bell. He said aloud of motor-cars, and specially of steam ones, all the things which I had read in the faces of superior coachmen. Then he pulled slant-wise across me.

There is a vociferous steam air-pump attached to my car which can be applied at pleasure. . . . .

The cart was removed about a bowshot's length in seven and a quarter seconds, to the accompaniment of parcels clattering. At the foot of the next hill the horse stopped, and the two men came out over the tail-board.

My engineer backed and swung the car, ready to move out of reach.

"The blighted egg-boiler has steam up," said Mr. Hinchcliff, pausing to gather a large stone. "Temporise with the beggar, Pye, till the sights come on!"

"I can't leave my 'orse!" roared the carrier; "but bring 'em up 'ere, an' I'll kill 'em all over again."

"Good morning, Mr. Pyecroft," I called cheerfully. "Can I give you a lift anywhere?"

The attack broke up round my fore-wheels.

"Well, we *do* 'ave the knack o' meeting *in puris naturalibus*, as I've so often said." Mr. Pyecroft wrung my hand. "Yes, I'm on leaf. So's Hinch. We're visiting friends among these kopjes."

A monotonous bellowing up the road persisted, where the carrier was still calling for corpses.

"That's Agg. He's Hinch's cousin. You aren't fortunit in your fam'ly connections, Hinch. 'E's usin' language in derogation of good manners. Go and abolish 'im."

Henry Salt Hinchcliff stalked back to the cart and spoke to his cousin. I recall much that the wind bore to me of his words and the carrier's. It seemed as if the friendship of years were dissolving amid throes.

"'Ave it your own silly way, then," roared the carrier, "an' get into Linghurst on your own silly feet. I've done with you two runagates." He lashed his horse and passed out of sight still rumbling.

"The fleet's sailed," said Pyecroft, "leavin' us on the beach. Had you any particular port on your mind?"

"Well, I was going to meet a friend at Instead Wick, but I don't mind——"

"Oh! that'll do as well as anything! We're on leaf, you see."

"She'll 'ardly hold four," said my engineer. I had broken him of the foolish habit of being surprised at things, but he was visibly uneasy.

Hinchcliff returned, drawn as by ropes to my steam-car, round which he walked in narrowing circles.

"What's her speed?" he demanded of the engineer.

"Twenty-five," said that loyal man.

"Easy to run?"

"No; very difficult," was the emphatic answer.

"That just shows that you ain't fit for your rating. D'you suppose that a man who earns his livin' by runnin' 30-knot destroyers for a parstime—for a parstime, mark you!—is going to lie down before any blighted land-crabbing steam-pinnace on springs?"

Yet that was what he did. Directly under the car he lay and looked upward into pipes—petrol, steam, and water—with a keen and searching eye.

I telegraphed Mr. Pyecroft a question.

"Not—in—the—least," was the answer. "Steam gadgets always take him that way. We 'ad a bit of a riot at Parsley Green through 'is tryin' to show a traction-engine haulin' gipsy-wagons how to turn corners."

"Tell him everything he wants to know," I said to the engineer, as I dragged out a rug and spread it on the roadside.

"*He* don't want much showing," said the engineer. Now, the two men had not, counting the time we took to stuff our pipes, been together more than three minutes.

"This," said Pyecroft, driving an elbow back into the mallow and the scabious of the hedge-foot, "is a little bit of all right. Hinch, I shouldn't let too much o' that 'ot muckings drop in my eyes. Your leaf's up in a fortnight, an' you'll be wantin' 'em."

"Here!" said Hinchcliff, still on his back, to the engineer. "Come here and show me the lead of this pipe." And the engineer lay down beside him.

"That's all right," said Mr. Hinchcliff, rising. "But she's more of a bag of tricks than I thought. Unship this superstructure aft"—he pointed to the back seat—"and I'll 'ave a look at the forced draught."

The engineer obeyed with alacrity. I heard him volunteer the fact that he had a brother an artificer in the Navy.

"They couple very well, those two," said Pyecroft critically, while Hinchcliff sniffed round the asbestos-lagged boiler and turned on gay jets of steam.

"Now take me up the road," he said. My man, for form's sake, looked at me.

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"Yes, take him," I said. "He's all right."

"No, I aren't," said Hinchcliff of a sudden —"not if I'm expected to judge my water out of a blighted shaving-glass."

The water-gauge of a steam-car is reflected on a mirror to the right of the dashboard. I also have found it inconvenient.

"Throw up your arm and look at the gauge under your armpit. Only mind how you steer while you're doing it, or you'll get

"The cart was removed about a bowshot's length in seven and a quarter seconds."

ditched!" I cried, as the car ran down the road.

"I wonder!" said Pyecroft, musing. "But, after all, it's your steamin' gadgets he's usin' for his libretto, as you might put it. He said to me after breakfast only this mornin' 'ow he thanked 'is Maker, on all fours, that he wouldn't see nor smell nor thumb a blighted bulgine till the nineteenth prox. Now look at 'im! Only look at 'im!"

We could see, down the long slope of the road, my driver surrendering his seat to Hinchcliff, while the car flickered generously from hedge to hedge.

"What happens if he upsets?"

"The petrol will light up and the boiler may blow up."

"'Ow rambunkshus! And"—Pyecroft blew a slow cloud—"Agg's about three hoops up this mornin', too."

"What's that to do with us? He's gone down the road," I retorted.

"Ye—es, but we'll overtake 'im. He's a vindictive blighter. He and Hinch 'ad words about pig-breeding this morning. O' course, Hinch don't know the elements o' that evolution; but 'e fell back on 'is naval rank an' office, an' Agg grew peevish. I wasn't sorry to get out of the cart. . . . 'Ave you ever considered how when you an' I meet, so to say, there's nearly always a remarkable hectic day ahead of us? Hullo! Be'old the beef-boat returnin'!"

He rose as the car climbed up the slope, and shouted: "In bow! Way 'nuff!"

"You be quiet!" cried Hinchcliff, and drew up opposite the rug, his dark face shining with joy. "She's the Poetry o' Motion! She's the Angel's Dream. She's——" He shut off steam, and the slope being against her, the car slid soberly down hill again.

"What's this here? I've got the brake on!" he yelled.

"It doesn't hold backwards," I said. "Put her on the mid-link."

"That's a nasty one for the chief engineer o' the *Djinn*, 31-knot T.B.D.," said Pyecroft. "*Do* you know what a mid-link is, Hinch?"

Once more the car returned to us; but as Pyecroft stooped to gather up the rug, Hinchcliff jerked the lever testily, and with prawn-like speed she retired backwards into her own steam.

"Apparently 'e don't," said Pyecroft. "What's he done now, sir?"

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"Reversed her. I've done it myself."

"But he's an engineer."

For the third time the car manœuvred up hill.

"I'll learn you to come alongside properly, if I keep you 'tiffies out all night!" shouted Pyecroft. It was evidently a quotation. Hinchcliff's face grew livid, and, his hand ever so slightly working on the throttle, the car buzzed twenty yards up hill.

"That's enough. We'll take your word for it. The mountain will come to Ma'ommed. Stand *fast!*"

Pyecroft and I and the rug marched up where she and Hinchcliff fumed together.

"Not as easy as it looks—eh, Hinch?"

"It is dead easy. I'm going to drive her to Instead Wick—aren't I?" said the first class engine-room artificer. I thought of his performances with No. 267 and nodded. After all, it was a little thing to accord to pure genius.

"But my engineer will stand by—at first," I added.

"An' you a family man, too," muttered Pyecroft, swinging himself into the right rear seat. "Sure to be a remarkably hectic day when we meet."

We adjusted ourselves and, in the language of Marryat's immortal doctor, paved our way towards Linghurst, distant by mile-post $11\frac{3}{4}$ miles.

Mr. Hinchcliff, every nerve and muscle braced, talked only to the engineer, and that professionally. I recalled the time when I, too, enjoyed the rack on which he voluntarily extended himself.

"Pyecroft kept him at bay with a rake-handle."

And the County of Sussex slid by in slow time.

"'Ow cautious is the 'tiffy-bird!" said Pyecroft.

"Even in a destroyer," Hinch snapped over his shoulder, "you ain't expected to con and drive simultaneous. Don't address any remarks to *me!*"

"Pump!" said the engineer. "Your water's droppin'."

"*I* know that. Where the 'Eavens is that blighted by-pass?"

He beat his right or throttle hand madly on the side of the car till he found the bent rod that more or less controls the pump, and, neglecting all else, twisted it furiously.

My engineer grabbed the steering-bar just in time to save us lurching into a ditch.

"If I was a burnin' peacock, with two 'undred bloodshot eyes in my shinin' tail, I'd need 'em all on this job!" said Hinch.

"Don't talk! Steer! This ain't the North Atlantic," Pyecroft replied.

"Blast my stokers! Why, the steam's dropped fifty pounds!" Hinchcliff cried.

"Fire's blown out," said the engineer. "Stop her!"

"Does she do that often?" said Hinch, descending.

"Sometimes."

"Any time?"

"Any time a cross-wind catches her."

The engineer produced a match and stooped.

My car never lights twice in the same fashion. This time she back-fired superbly, and Pyecroft went out over the right rear wheel in a column of rich yellow flame.

"I've seen a mine explode at Bantry—once—prematoor," he volunteered.

"That's all right," said Hinchcliff, brushing down his singed beard with a singed

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forefinger. (He had been watching too closely). "'As she any more little surprises up her blighted sleeve?"

"She hasn't begun yet," said my engineer, with a scornful cough. "Someone 'as opened the petrol-supply-valve too wide."

"Change places with me, Pyecroft," I commanded, for I remembered that the

"'Shall I stop, or shall I cut 'im down?'"

petrol-supply, the steam-lock, and the forced draught were all controlled from the right rear seat.

"Me? Why? There's a whole switch-board full o' nickel-plated muckin's which I 'aven't begun to play with yet. The starboard side's crawlin' with 'em."

"Change, or I'll kill you!" said Hinch-cliff, and he looked like it.

"That's the 'tiffy all over. When anything goes wrong, blame it on the lower deck. Navigate by your blighted self, then! *I* won't help you any more."

We navigated for a mile in dead silence.

"Talkin' o' wakes——" said Pyecroft suddenly.

"We weren't," Hinchcliff grunted.

"There's some wakes would break a snake's back; but this of yours, so to speak, would fair turn a tapeworm giddy. That's all I wish to observe, Hinch. . . . . Cart at anchor on the port-bow. It's Agg!"

Far up the shaded road into secluded Bromlingleigh we saw the carrier's cart at rest before the post-office.

"He's bung in the fairway. 'Ow'm I to get past?" said Hinchcliff. "There's no room. 'Ere, Pye, come and relieve the wheel!"

"Nay, nay, Pauline. You've made your own bed. You've as good as left your 'appy 'ome an' family cart to steal it. Now you lie on it."

"Ring your bell," I suggested.

"Glory!" said Pyecroft, falling forward into the nape of Hinchcliff's neck, as the car stopped dead.

"Get out o' my back-hair! That must have been the blighted brake I touched off," Hinchcliff muttered, and repaired his error tumultuously.

We passed the cart as though we had been all Bruges belfry. Agg, from the post-office door, regarded us with a too pacific eye. I remembered later that the pretty post-mistress looked on us pityingly.

Hinchcliff wiped the sweat from his brow and drew breath. It was the first vehicle that he had passed, and I sympathised with him.

"You needn't grip so hard," said my engineer. "She steers as easy as a bicycle."

"Ho! You suppose I ride bicycles up an' down my engine-room?" was the answer. "I've other things to think about. She's a terror. She's a whistlin' lunatic. I'd sooner run the old South Easter at Simon's Town than 'er!"

"One of the nice things they say about her," I interrupted, "is that no engineer is needed to run this machine."

"No. They'd need about seven."

"'Common sense only is needed,'" I quoted.

"Make a note of that, Hinch. Just common sense." Pyecroft put in.

"And now," I said, "we'll have to take in water. There isn't more than a couple of inches in the tank."

"Where d'you get it from?"

"Oh!—cottages and such-like."

"Yes, but that being so, where does our much advertised twenty-five miles an hour come in? Ain't a fly more to the point?"

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"If you want to go anywhere, I suppose it would be," I replied.

"*I* don't want to go anywhere special. I'm thinkin' of you who've got to live with her. She'll burn her tubes if she loses her water?"

"She will."

"I've never scorched yet, and I ain't goin' to begin now." He shut off steam firmly. "Out you get, Pye, an' shove 'er along by 'and."

"Where to?"

"The nearest water-tank" was the reply. "An' Sussex is a dry county."

"She ought to 'ave drag-ropes—little pipe-clayed ones," said Pyecroft.

We got out and pushed under the hot sun for half a mile till we came to a cottage, sparsely inhabited by one child who wept.

"All out haymakin', o' course," said Pyecroft, thrusting his head into the parlour for an instant. "What's the evolution now?"

"Skirmish till we find a well," I said.

"Hmm! But they wouldn't 'ave left that kid without a chaperon, so to say . . . I thought so! Where's a stick?"

A bluish and silent beast of the true old sheep-dog breed glided from behind an outhouse and without words fell to work.

Pyecroft kept him at bay with a rake-handle while our party, in rallying-square, retired along the box-bordered brick-path to the car.

At the garden gate the dumb devil halted, looked back on the child, and sat down to scratch.

"That's 'is three-mile limit, thank Heaven!" said Pyecroft. "Fall in, push-party, and proceed with land-transport o' pinnace. I'll protect your flanks in case this sniffin' flea-bag is tempted beyond 'is strength."

We pushed off in silence. The car weighs 1,200 lb., and even on ball-bearings is a powerful sudorific. From somewhere behind a hedge we heard a gross rustic laugh.

"Those are the beggars we lie awake for, patrollin' the high seas. There ain't a port in China where we wouldn't be better treated. Yes, a Boxer 'ud be ashamed of it."

A cloud of fine dust boomed down the road.

"Some 'appy craft with a well-found engine-room! 'Ow different!" panted Hinchcliff, bent over the starboard mud-guard.

It was a claret-coloured petrol car, and it stopped courteously, as good cars will at sight of trouble.

"Water, only water," I answered in reply to offers of help.

"There's a lodge at the end of these oak palings. They'll give you all you want. Say I sent you. Gregory—Michael Gregory. Good-bye!"

"Ought to 'ave been in the Service. Prob'ly is," was Pyecroft's comment.

At that thrice-blessed lodge our water-tank was filled (I dare not quote Mr. Hinchcliff's remarks when he saw the collapsible rubber bucket with which we did it) and we re-embarked. It seemed that Sir Michael Gregory owned many acres, and that his park ran for miles.

"No objection to your going through it," said the lodge-keeper. "It'll save you a goodish bit to Instead Wick."

But we needed petrol, which could be purchased at Pigginfold, a few miles further up, and so we held to the main road, as our fate had decreed.

"We've come seven miles in fifty-four minutes, so far," said Hinchcliff (he was driving with greater freedom and less responsibility), "and now we 'ave to fill our bunkers. A pair of stilts would be quicker—*my* way of thinkin'."

At Pigginsfold, after ten minutes, we refilled our petrol tank and lavishly oiled our engines. Mr. Hinchcliff wished to discharge our engineer on the grounds that he (Mr. Hinchcliff) was now entirely abreast of his work. To this I demurred, for I knew my car. She had, in the language of the road, held up for a day and a half, and by most bitter experience I suspected that her time was very near. Therefore, three miles short of Linghurst I was less surprised than anyone, excepting always my engineer, when the engines set up a most bitter clamour and, spasmodically kicking, refused to rotate.

"'Eaven forgive me all the 'arsh things I may 'ave said about destroyers in my sinful time!" wailed Hinchcliff, snapping back the throttle. "What's worryin' Ada now?"

"The forward eccentric-strap screw's dropped off," said the engineer, investigating.

"That all? I thought it was a propeller-blade."

"We must go an' look for it. There isn't another."

"Not me," said Pyecroft from his seat. "Out pinnace, Hinch, an' creep for it. It won't be more than five miles back."

The two men, with bowed heads, mooned up the road.

"Look like etymologists, don't they?

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Does she decant her innards often, so to speak?" Pyecroft asked.

I told him the true tale of a race-full of ball bearings, strewn four miles along a Hampshire road, and by me recovered in detail. He was profoundly touched.

"Poor Hinch! Poor—poor Hinch!" he said. "And that's only one of her little games, is it? He'll be 'omesick for the Navy by night."

When the search-party doubled back with the missing screw, it was Hinchcliff who replaced it in less than five minutes, while my engineer looked on admiringly.

"She came like a destroyer on her trial."

"Your boiler's only seated on four little paper-clips like," he said, crawling from beneath her. "She's a wicker, willow lunch-basket below. She's a runnin' miracle! 'Ave you 'ad this combustible spirit-lamp long?"

I told him.

"And yet you was afraid to come into the *Nightmare's* engine-room when we was runnin' trials!"

"It's all a matter of taste," Pyecroft volunteered. "But I will say for you, Hinch, you've certainly got the hang of her steamin' gadgets in quick time."

He was driving her very sweetly, but with a worried look in his eye and a tremor in his arm.

"She don't seem to answer her 'elm, somehow," he said.

"There's a lot of play to the steering-gear," said my engineer. "We generally tighten it up every few miles."

"'Like me to stop now? We've run as much as one mile and a half without incident," he replied tartly.

"Then you're lucky," said my engineer, bristling in turn.

"They'll wreck the whole turret out o' nasty professional spite in a minute," said Pyecroft. "That's the worst o' machinery. Man dead ahead, Hinch—semaphorin' like the flagship in a fit!"

"Oh, 'Eavens!" said Hinchcliff. "Shall I stop, or shall I cut 'im down?"

He stopped, for full in the centre of the Linghurst Road stood a person in pepper-and-salt raiment (ready made) with a brown telegraph envelope in his hands.

"Twenty-three and a half miles an hour," he began, weighing a small beam-engine of a Waterbury in one red paw. "From the top of the hill over our measured quarter-mile — twenty-three and a half."

"You manurial gardener——" Hinchcliff began. I prodded him warningly from behind, and laid the other hand on Pyecroft's stiffening knee.

"Also—on information received—drunk and disorderly in charge of a motor-car—to the common danger — two men like sailors in appearance," the man went on.

"'Like sailors'! . . . That's Agg. No wonder he smiled at us," said Pyecroft.

"I've been waiting for you some time," the man concluded, folding up the telegram. "Who's the owner?"

I indicated myself.

"Then I want you as well as the two seafaring men. Drunk and disorderly can be treated summary. You come on."

My relations with the Sussex constabulary have, so far, been of the best, but I could not love this person.

"Of course you have your authority to show?" I hinted.

"I'll show it you at Linghurst," he

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retorted hotly — "all the authority you want."

"I only want the badge, or warrant, or whatever it is a plain-clothes man has to show."

He made as though to produce it, but checked himself, repeating less politely the invitation to Linghurst. The action and the tone confirmed my many-times tested theory that the bulk of English shore-going institutions are based on conformable strata of absolutely impervious inaccuracy. I reflected and became aware of a drumming on the back of the front seat that Pyecroft, bowed forward and relaxed, was tapping with his knuckles. The hardly checked fury on Hinchcliff's brow had given place to a greasy imbecility, and he nodded over the steering-bar. In longs and shorts, as laid down by the pious and immortal Mr. Morse, Pyecroft tapped out: "Sham drunk. Get him in the car."

"I can't stay here all day," said the constable.

Pyecroft raised his head. Then was seen with what majesty the British sailor-man envisages a new situation.

"Met gennelman heavy sheeway," said he. "Do' tell me British gelman can't give 'ole Brish Navy lif' own blighted ste' cart. Have another drink!"

"I didn't know they were as drunk as all that when they stopped me," I explained.

"You can say all that at Linghurst," was the answer. "Come on."

"Quite right," I said. "But the question is, if you take these two out on the road, they'll fall down or start killing you."

"Then I'd call on you to assist me in the execution o' my duty."

"But I'd see you further first. You'd better come with us in the car. I'll turn this passenger out." (This was my engineer, sitting quite silent). "You don't want him, and, anyhow, he'd only be a witness for the defence."

"That's true," said the constable. "But it wouldn't make any odds—at Linghurst, you see."

My engineer skipped into the bracken like a rabbit. I bade him cut across Sir Michael Gregory's park, and if he caught my friend, to tell him I should probably be rather late for lunch.

"I ain't going to be driven by *him*." Our destined prey pointed at Hinchcliff with apprehension.

"Of course not. You take my seat and keep the big sailor in order. He's too drunk to do much. I'll change places with the other one. Only be quick; I want to pay my fine and get it over."

"That's the way to look at it," he said, dropping into the left rear seat. "We're making quite a lot out o' you motor gentry." He folded his arms judicially as the car gathered way under Hinchcliff's stealthy hand.

"But *you* aren't driving!" he cried, half rising.

"No. He ain't," said Pyecroft, and embraced him with one anaconda-like left arm.

"Don't kill him," said Hinchcliff briefly. "I want to show him what twenty-three and a quarter is." We were going a fair twelve, which is about her limit.

The passenger said something and then groaned.

"Hush, darling!" said Pyecroft, "or I'll 'ave to 'ug you."

The main road, white under the noon sun, lay broad before us, running north to Linghurst. We slowed and looked anxiously for a side track.

"And now," said I, "I want to see your authority."

"The badge of your ratin'?" Pyecroft added.

"I'm a constable," he said, and kicked. Indeed, his boots would have bewrayed him across half a county's plough; but boots are not legal evidence.

"I want your authority," I repeated coldly. "Some evidence that you are not a common, drunken tramp."

It was as I had expected. He had forgotten or mislaid his badge. He had neglected to learn the outlines of the work for which he received money and consideration; and he expected me, the taxpayer, to go to infinite trouble to supplement his deficiencies.

"If you don't believe me, come to Linghurst," was the burden of his almost national anthem.

"But I can't run all over Sussex every time a blackmailer jumps up and says he is a policeman."

"Why, it's quite close," he persisted.

"'Twon't be—soon," said Hinchcliff.

"None of the other people ever made any trouble. To be sure, they was gentlemen," he cried. "All I can say is, it may be very funny, but it ain't fair."

I laboured with him in this dense fog, but to no end. He had forgotten his badge, and we were villains for that we did not cart him to the pub or barracks where he had left it.

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Pyecroft listened critically as we spun along the hard road.

"If he was a concentrated Boer, he couldn't expect much more," he observed. "Now, suppose I'd been a lady in a delicate state o' health—you'd ha' made me very ill with your doings."

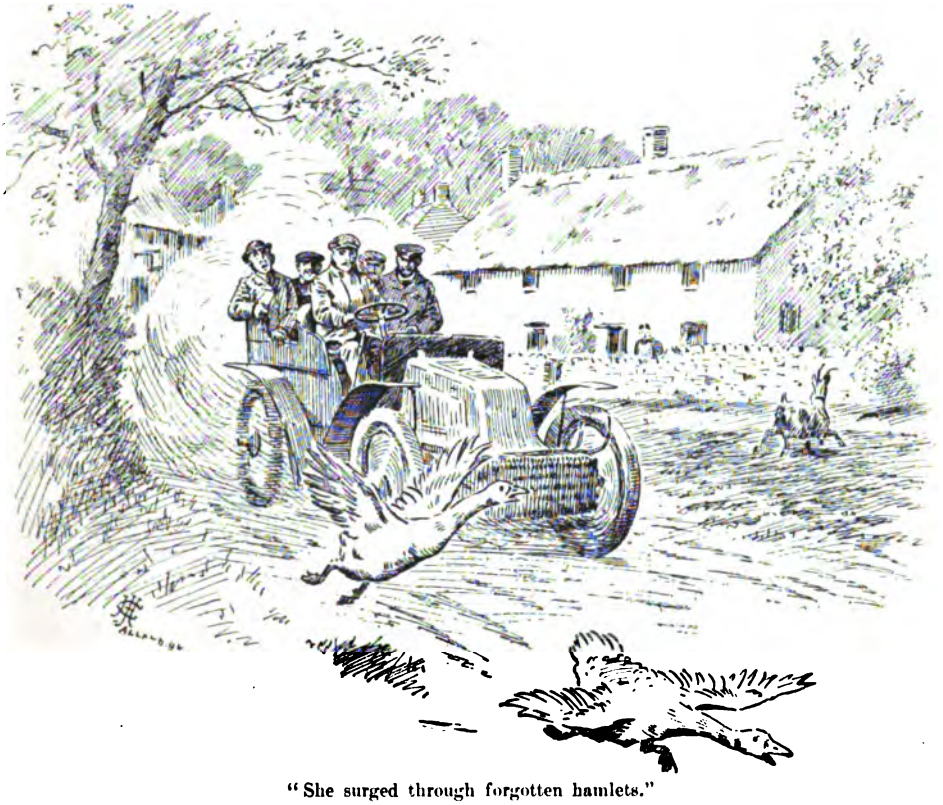
"I wish I 'ad. 'Ere! 'Elp! 'Elp! Hi!"

The man had seen a constable in uniform fifty yards ahead, where a lane ran into the road, and would have said more but that Hinchcliff jerked her up that lane with a

"Not if you go on talking. 'E won't be able to," said Pyecroft. "I don't know what traverse you think you're workin', but your duty till you're put in cells for a highway robber is to love, honour, an' cherish *me* most special—performin' all evolutions signalled in rapid time. I tell you this, in case o' anything turnin' up."

"Don't you fret about things turnin' up," was the reply.

Hinchcliff had given the car a generous throttle, and she was well set to work, when,



"She surged through forgotten hamlets."

wrench that nearly capsized us as the constable came running heavily.

It seemed to me that both our guest and his fellow-villain in uniform smiled as we fled down the road easterly betwixt the narrowing hedges.

"You'll know all about it in a little time," said our guest. "You've only yourselves to thank for runnin' your 'ead into a trap," and he whistled ostentatiously.

We made no answer.

"If that man 'ad chose, 'e could have identified me," he said.

Still we were silent.

"But 'e'll do it later, when you're caught."

without warning, the road—there are two or three in Sussex like it—turned down and ceased.

"Holy Muckins!" he cried, and stood on both brakes as our helpless tyres slithered over wet grass and bracken—down and down into forest—early British woodland. It was the change of a nightmare, and that all should fit, fifty yards ahead of us a babbling brook barred our way. On the far side a velvet green ride, sprinkled with rabbits and fern, gently sloped upwards and away, but behind us was no hope. Forty-horse power would never have rolled wet tyres up that verdurous cliff we had descended.

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"H'm!" Our guest coughed significantly. "A great many cars thinks they can take this road; but they all come back. We walks after 'em at our convenience."

"Meanin' that the other jaunty is now pursuin' us on 'is lily feet?" said Pyecroft.

"*Pre*cisely."

"An' you think," said Pyecroft (I have no hope to render the scorn of the words), "*that'll* make any odds? Get out!"

The man obeyed with alacrity.

"See those spars up-ended over there? I mean that wickyup-thing. 'Op-poles, then, you rural blighter! Keep on fetching me 'op-poles at the double."

And he doubled, Pyecroft at his heels, for they had arrived at a perfect understanding.

There was a stack of hurdles a few yards down stream, laid aside after sheep-washing; and there were stepping-stones in the brook. Hinchcliff rearranged these last to make some sort of causeway; I brought up the hurdles; and when Pyecroft and his subaltern had dropped a dozen hop-poles across the stream, laid them down over all.

"Talk o' the Agricultur'l 'All!" he said, mopping his brow—"'tisn't in it with us. The approach to the bridge must now be paved with 'urdles, owin' to the squashy nature o' the country. Yes, an' we'd better 'ave one or two on the far side to lead her on to *terror fermior*. Now, Hinch! Give her full steam and 'op along. If she slips off, we're done. Shall I take the wheel?"

"No. This is my job," said the first class engine-room artificer. "Get over the far side, and be ready to catch me if she jibs on the uphill."

We crossed that elastic structure and stood ready amid the bracken. Hinchcliff gave her full steam and she came like a destroyer on her trial. There was a crack, a flicker of white water, and she was in our arms fifty yards up the slope; or, rather, we were behind her pushing her madly towards a patch of raw gravel whereon her wheels could bite. Of the bridge remained only a few wildly vibrating hop-poles, and those hurdles which had been sunk in the mud of the approaches.

"She—she kicked out all the loose ones be'ind her, as she finished with 'em," Hinchcliff panted.

"At the Agricultural 'All they would 'ave been fastened down with ribbons," said Pyecroft. "But this ain't Olympia."

"She nearly wrenched the tiller out of my 'and. Don't you think I conned 'er like a cock-angel, Pye?"

"*I* never saw anything like it," said our guest propitiatingly. "And now, gentlemen, if you'll let me go back to Linghurst, I promise you you won't hear another word from me."

"Get in," said Pyecroft, as we puffed out on to a metalled road once more. "We 'aven't begun on *you* yet."

"A joke's a joke," he replied. "I don't mind a little bit of a joke myself, but this is going beyond it."

"Miles an' miles beyond it, if this machine stands up. We'll want water pretty soon."

Our guest's countenance brightened, and Pyecroft perceived it.

"Let me tell you," he said earnestly, "I won't make any difference to you whatever happens. Barrin' a dhow or two Tajurrah way, prizes are scarce in the Navy. 'Ence we never abandon 'em."

There was a long silence. Pyecroft broke it suddenly.

"Robert," he said, "'ave you a mother?"

"Yes."

"'Ave you a big brother?"

"Yes."

"An' a little sister?"

"Yes."

"Robert. Does your mamma keep a dog?"

"Yes. Why?"

"All right, Robert. I won't forget it."

I looked for an explanation.

"I saw 'is blighted photograph in full uniform on the mantelpiece o' that cottage before faithful Fido turned up," Pyecroft whispered. "Ain't you glad it's all in the family somehow?"

We filled with water at a cottage on the edge of St. Leonards Forest and, despite our increasing leakage, made shift to climb the ridge above Instead Wick. Knowing her as I did, I felt sure that final collapse would not be long delayed. My sole concern was to run our guest well into the wilderness before that came.

On the roof of the world—a naked plateau clothed with young heather—she retired from active life in floods of tears. Her feed-water-heater (Hinchcliff blessed it and its maker for three minutes) was leaking beyond hope of repair; she had shifted most of her packing, and her water-pump would not lift.

"If I 'ad a bit of piping, I could disconnect this tin cartridge-case an' feed direct into the boiler. It 'ud knock down her speed, but we could get on," said he, and looked hopelessly at the long dun ridges that hove us above the panorama of Sussex.

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Northward we could see the London haze. Southward, between gaps of the whale-backed Downs, lay the Channel's zinc-blue. But all our available population in that vast survey was one cow and a kestrel.

"It's down hill to Instead Wick. We can run her there by gravity," I said at last.

"Then he'll only have to walk to the station to get 'ome. Unless we take off 'is boots first," Pyecroft replied.

"That," said our guest earnestly, "would be theft atop of assault, and very serious."

"Oh, let's 'ang him an' be done," Hinchcliff grunted. "It's evidently what he's sufferin' for."

Somehow murder did not appeal to us that warm noon. We sat down to smoke in the heather, and presently out of the valley below came the thick beat of a petrol-motor ascending. I paid little attention to it till I heard the howl of a horn that has no duplicate in all the Home Counties.

"That's the man I was going to lunch with!" I cried. "Hold on!" and I ran down the road.

It was a big, black, black-dashed, tonneaued twelve-horse Octopod; and it bore not only Kysh my friend, and Salmon his engineer, but my own man, who for the first time in our acquaintance smiled.

"Did they get you? What did you get? I was coming into Linghurst as witness to character—your man told me what happened—but I was stopped near Instead Wick myself," cried Kysh.

"What for?"

"Leaving car unattended. An infernal swindle, when you think of the loose carts outside every pub in the county. I was jawing with the police for an hour, but it's no use. They've got it all their own way, and we're helpless."

Hereupon I told him my tale, and for proof, as we topped the hill, pointed out the little group round my car.

All supreme emotion is dumb. Kysh put on the brake and hugged me to his bosom till I groaned. Then, as I remember, he crooned like a mother returned to her suckling.

"Divine! Divine!" he murmured. "Command me."

"Take charge of the situation," I said. "You'll find a Mr. Pyecroft on the quarter-deck. I'm altogether out of it."

"He shall stay there. Who am I but the instrument of vengeance in the hands of an overruling Providence? (And I put in fresh sparking plugs this morning). Salmon, take that steam-kettle home, somehow. I would be alone."

"Filsey," I said to my man, "help Salmon home with my car."

"Home? Now? It's hard. It's cruel 'ard," said Filsey, almost with a sob.

Hinchcliff outlined my car's condition briefly to the two engineers. Mr. Pyecroft clung to our guest, who stared with affrighted eyes at the palpitating Octopod; and the free wind of high Sussex whimpered across the heather.

"I am quite agreeable to walkin' 'ome all the way on my feet," said our guest. "I wouldn't go to any railway station. It 'ud be just the proper finish to our little joke." He laughed nervously.

"What's the evolution?" said Pyecroft, disregarding. "Do we turn over to the new cruiser?"

I nodded, and he escorted our guest to the tonneau with care. When I was in, he sat himself broad-armed on the little flap-seat which controls the door. Hinchcliff sat by Kysh.

"You drive?" Kysh asked, with the smile that has won him his chequered way through the world.

"Steam only, and I've about had my whack for to-day, thanks."

"I see."

The long, low car slid forward and then dropped like a bullet down the descent our steam toy had so painfully climbed. Our guest's face blanched, and he clutched the back of the tonneau.

"New commander's evidently been trained on a destroyer," said Hinchcliff.

"What's 'is wonderful name?" whispered Pyecroft. "Ho! Well, I'm glad it ain't Saul we've run up against—nor Nimshi, for that matter. This is makin' me feel religious."

Our impetus carried us half-way up the next slope, where we steadied to a resonant twelve an hour against the collar.

"What do you think?" I called to Hinchcliff.

"'Tain't as sweet as steam, o' course; but for power it's twice the *Furious* against half the *Jaseur* in a head-sea."

Volumes could not have touched it more exactly. His bright eyes were glued on Kysh's hands juggling with the levers behind the discreet backward sloping dash.

"An' what sort of a brake might you use?" he said politely.

"This," Kysh replied, as the last of the hill shot up to one in eleven. He let the

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car run back a few feet and caught her deftly on the brake, repeating the performance cup and ball fashion. It was like being daped above the Pit at the end of your uncoiled solar plexus. Even Pyecroft held his breath.

"It ain't fair! It ain't fair!" our guest moaned. "You're makin' me sick."

"What an ungrateful blighter he is!" said Pyecroft. "Money couldn't buy you a run like this . . . Do it well overboard!"

"We'll just trundle up the Forest and drop into the Park Row, I think," said Kysh. "There's a bit of good going hereabouts."

He flung a careless knee over the low raking tiller that the ordinary expert puts under his oxter, and down four miles of yellow road, cut through barren waste, the Octopod sang like a six-inch shell.

"Whew! But you know your job," said Hinchcliff. "You're wasted 'ere. I'd give something to 'ave you in my engine-room."

"He's steering with 'is little hind-legs," said Pyecroft. "Stand up and look at him, Robert. You'll never see such a sight again!"

"Nor don't want to," was our guest's reply. "Five 'undred pounds wouldn't begin to cover 'is fines even since I've been with him."

Park Row is reached by one hill which drops three hundred feet in half a mile. Kysh had the thought to steer with his hand down the abyss, but the manner in which he took the curved bridge at the bottom brought my few remaining hairs much nearer the grave.

"We're in Surrey now; better look out," I said.

"Never mind. I'll roll her into Kent for a bit. We've lots of time; it's only three o'clock."

"Won't you want to fill your bunkers, or take water, or anything?" said Hinchcliff.

"We don't use water, and she's good for two hundred on one tank o' petrol."

"Two 'undred miles from 'ome and mother *and* faithful Fido to-night, Robert," said Pyecroft, slapping our guest on the knee. "Cheer up! Why, I've known a destroyer do less."

We passed with some decency through some towns, till by way of the Hastings road we whirled into Cramberhurst, which is a deep pit.

"Now," said Kysh, "we begin."

"Previous service not reckoned towards pension," said Pyecroft. "We are doin' you lavish, Robert."

"But when's this silly game to finish, any-'ow?" our guest snarled.

"You'll fall in at six bells all right enough. Don't worry about the *when* of it. The *where's* the interestin' point for you, sonny."

I had seen Kysh drive before, and I thought I knew the Octopod, but that afternoon he and she were exalted beyond my knowledge. He improvised on the keys—the snapping levers and quivering accelerators—marvellous variations, so that our progress was sometimes a fugue and sometimes a barn-dance, varied on open greens by the weaving of fairy rings. When I protested, all that he would say was: "I'll hypnotise the fowl! I'll dazzle the rooster!" or other words equally futile. And she—oh! that I could do her justice!—she turned her broad black bows to the westering sun, and lifted us high upon hills that we might see and rejoice with her. She whooped into still hollows of elm and Sussex weed; she devoured infinite perspectives of grey split-oak park palings; she surged through forgotten hamlets, whose one street gave back, reduplicated, the clatter of her exhaust, and, tireless, she repeated the motions. Over naked uplands she droned like a homing bee, her shadow lengthening in the sun that she chased to his lair. She nosed up unparochial byways and accommodation-roads of the least accommodation, and put old scarred turf or new-raised molehills under her most marvellous springs with never a jar. And since the King's highway is used for every purpose save traffic, in mid-career she stepped aside for or flung amazing loops about, the brainless driver, the driverless horse, the drunken carrier, the engaged couple, the female student of the bicycle and her staggering instructor, the pig, the perambulator, and the infant school (where that disembogued on cross-roads), with the grace of Lottie Venne and the lithe abandon of all the Vokes family. But at heart she was ever Judic as I remember that Judic long ago—Judic clad in bourgeois black from wrist to ankle, achieving marvellous improprieties.

We were all silent—Hinchcliff and Pyecroft through professional appreciation; I with a layman's delight in the expert; and our guest because of fear.

At the edge of the evening she smelt the sea to southward and sheered thither like the strong-winged albatross, to circle enormously amid green flats fringed by martello towers.

"Ain't that Eastbourne yonder?" said

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"In his bowler hat he kneeled before kangaroos—gigantic, erect, . . . in the heart of Sussex!"

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our guest, reviving. "I've a aunt there could identify me."

"Don't worry her for a little thing like that," said Pyecroft; and ere he had ceased to praise family love and domestic service, the Downs rose between us and the sea, and the Long Man of Hillingdon lay out upon the turf.

"Trevington — up left — is a fairly isolated little dorp," I said, for I was beginning to feel hungry.

"No," said Kysh. "He'd get a lift to the railway in no time. . . . Besides, I'm enjoying myself . . . Three pounds eighteen and sixpence. Beastly swindle!"

I take it one of his more recent fines was rankling in Kysh's brain; but he drove like the Archangel of the Twilight.

About the longitude of Cassocks, Hinchcliff yawned. "Aren't we ever goin' to maroon the blighter? I'm hungry, too."

"The commodore wants his money back," I answered.

"If he drives like this habitual, there must be a tidyish little lump owin' him," said Pyecroft. "Well, I'm agreeable."

"I didn't know it could be done. S'welp me, I didn't," our guest murmured.

"But you will," said Kysh. And that was the first and last time he addressed the man.

We ran through Penfield Green, half stupefied with open air, drugged with the relentless boom of the Octopod, and extinct with famine.

"I used to shoot about here," said Kysh, a few miles further on. "Open that gate, plëase," and he slowed as the sun touched the sky-line. At this point we left metalled roads and bucked vigorously amid ditches and under trees for twenty minutes.

"'Only cross-country car on the market," he said, as we wheeled into a straw-yard where a lone bull bellowed defiance to our growlings. "Open that gate, please. I hope the cattle-bridge will stand up."

"I've took a few risks in my time," said Pyecroft, as timbers cracked beneath us and we entered between thickets, "but I'm a babe to this man, Hinch."

"Don't talk to me. Watch *'im!* It's a liberal education, as Shakespeare says. Fallen tree on the port bow, sir."

"Right! That's my mark. Sit tight!"

She flung up her tail like a sounding whale and buried us in a fifteen-foot deep bridle-path buttressed with the exposed roots of enormous beeches. The wheels leaped from root to rounded boulder, and it was very dark in the shadow of the foliage.

"There ought to be a hammer-pond somewhere." Kysh was letting her down this chute in brakeful spasms.

"Water dead ahead, sir. Stack o' brushwood on the starboard beam, and—no road," sang Pyecroft.

"Cr-r-ri-key!" said Hinchcliff, as the car on a wild cant to the left went astern, screwing herself round the angle of a track that overhung the pond. "If she only 'ad two propellers, I believe she'd talk poetry. She can do everything else."

"We're rather on our port wheels now," said Kysh; "but I don't think she'll capsize. This road isn't used much by motors."

"You don't say so?" said Pyecroft. "What a pity!"

She bored through a mass of crackling brushwood and emerged into an upward sloping fern-glade fenced with woods so virgin, so untouched, that William Rufus might have ridden off as we entered. We climbed out of the violet-purple shadows towards the upland where the last of the day lingered. I was filled to my moist eyes with the deep, instriking beauty of sense and association that clad it all.

"Does 'unger produce 'allucinations?" said Pyecroft in a whisper. "Because I've just seen a sacred ibis walkin' arm in arm with a British cock-pheasant."

"What are you panickin' at?" said Hinchcliff. "I've been seein' zebra for the last two minutes, but *I* 'aven't complained."

He pointed behind us, and I beheld a superb painted zebra (Burchell's, I think), following our track with palpitating nostrils. The car stopped, and it fled away.

There was a little pond in front of us from which rose a dome of irregular sticks crowned with a blunt-muzzled beast that sat upon its haunches.

"Is it contagious?" said Pyecroft.

"Yes. I'm seeing beaver," I replied.

"It is here!" said Kysh, with the air and gesture of Captain Nemo, and half turned.

"No—no—no! For 'Eaven's sake—not 'ere!" Our guest gasped like a sea-bathed child, as four efficient hands swung him far outboard on to the turf. The car ran back noiselessly down the slope.

"Look! Look! It's blighted sorcery!" cried Hinchcliff.

There was a report like a pistol-shot as the beaver dived from the roof of his lodge, but we watched our guest. He was on his knees, praying to kangaroos. Yea, in his bowler hat he kneeled before kangaroos—gigantic, erect, silhouetted against the light

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— four buck-kangaroos in the heart of Sussex !

And we retrogressed over the velvet grass till our hind-wheels struck well-rolled gravel, leading us to sanity, main roads, and, half an hour later, the "Grapnel Inn" at Horsham.

* * * * *

After a great meal we poured libations and made burnt-offerings in honour of Kysh, who received our homage graciously, and, by the way, explained a few things in the natural history line that had puzzled us. England is a most marvellous country, but one is not trained to accept kangaroos, zebras, or beavers as part of its landscape.

When we went to bed, Pyecroft pressed my hand, his voice thick with emotion.

"We owe it to you," he said. "We owe it all to you. Didn't I say we never met in *pup-pup-puris naturalibus*, if I may so put it, without a remarkably 'ectic day ahead of us ?"

"That's all right," I said. "Mind the candle." He was tracing smoke-patterns on the wall.

"But what I want to know is whether we'll succeed in acclimatisin' the blighter, or whether the keepers'll kill 'im before 'e gets accustomed to 'is surroundin's ?"

Some day I think we must go up the Linghurst Road and find out.

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MR. SOLOMON J. SOLOMON, A.R.A.

THE MAN AND HIS WORK.

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IT is not an easy task to write about an artist whose life-work is not nearly at an end, who is still in the full possession of great gifts, and is constantly seeking fresh fields for the expression of the artistic powers. Mr. Solomon J. Solomon is a young man to-day, with many working years before him. It is too early to estimate his place among contemporary artists. One can do no more than call attention to some of his most interesting work, and point to the purposes and models that seem to inspire his brush.

The artist was born in the autumn of 1860, and educated at private schools and by private tutors. He is one of a large family, and is not the only member with a taste for painting and an appreciation for the sister arts; but he has developed his natural instincts in that direction further than the other brothers and sisters, and his student years found him at work in countries that never fail to inspire the minds that respond readily to great impressions. In London he was to be found at Heatherley's and the R.A. Schools. He passed then to Paris and Munich, and during the term of his *Wanderjahre* visited Italy, Spain, and Morocco. The fine emotions of the Florentine School, the splendid colours of the Venetians have had their distinct influence upon his pictures, and he has seen great work—not as we see it in the National Gallery, with a pageant of cloudy skies beyond—but in the places where the artists wrought. Tintoretto may appeal to us in London, but how much greater does he seem in Venice! Velasquez and Rembrandt may impose their powerful personalities upon us in Trafalgar Square, but they can do infinitely more in Madrid and Amsterdam. And in the spring days of a man's career, when ambitions and hopes are at the highest, how can one overestimate

"YOUR HEALTH!" BY SOLOMON J. SOLOMON, A.R.A.

A portrait picture. The late Dr. Ernest Hart is the host. On his right is Miss Ethel Wright, and next to her Mr. Forbes Robertson. On the left is Sir Benjamin Baker. Mr. Arthur Hacker and Mr. Henry Arthur Jones are also of the party.

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"LAUS DEO."

By Solomon J. Solomon, A.R.A.

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Photo by [*H. W. R. Child.*

"THE BLIND BEGGAR." BY SOLOMON J. SOLOMON, A.R.A.
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the advantage of seeing the world's greatest works in their proper setting with the associations that rightly belong to them? With regard to colour particularly, the advantage is essential. So far as Mr. Solomon is concerned, these impressions seem to have endured down to the present hour. He is a man modelled upon Old

with the literary side of painting and to seek salvation in colour and harmonious composition, in the æsthetic point of view as apart from all others. He would probably find more qualities in a Whistler nocturne than the late John Ruskin could, but he would not endeavour to do purely impressionistic work nor to devote much time to its study; it would not interest him. He can draw as well as he can paint. Perhaps he is conscious that the draughtsmanship of many of the latter-day lights is woefully to seek.

It must not be imagined that because he is not disposed to favour comparatively modern movements in art, he is readily pleased with his own work; he has no severer critic than himself. Time after time, when the works on his easel have been nearing completion—he paints large pictures with life-size figures—visitors to his studio have been surprised to find the work of weeks ruthlessly removed, because some fault visible only to the trained eye has been manifested. This painting-out is detrimental to the picture—so much, at least, is undeniable; in the inevitable mixing of colour that follows lies one of the reasons for the early fading of so many modern pictures—but Mr. Solomon is too conscientious an artist to let anything leave his studio before it represents the best that he can do; and in years before the Royal Academy had given him the honour of an Associateship, he might be seen in Burlington House on Varnishing Day putting finishing touches to his work, working to the eleventh hour, and even a little beyond it. Happily for him, most people are far more conscious of the best qualities of his work than he appears to be.

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In the collection of] [*Sir Joseph Pulley, Bart.*

"WAITING." BY SOLOMON J. SOLOMON, A.R.A.

The first picture, as distinct from portraiture, exhibited by Mr. Solomon at the Royal Academy.

are also conscious that he has given some measure of divinity to many a female form.

Some of his brethren of the brush protest that he is too literary, that his work appeals as much by reason of the subject as the treatment; but they are not the less ready to acknowledge the cleverness of it all, the apparent facility with which the subject is expressed within the limits of the canvas; and, in truth, the apt and facile treatment of the artist's big subjects is the result of very great and sustained endeavour. He has a sense for the dramatic in incident, a feeling for the exact moment at which a pageant becomes most pictorial; and this, surely, is the combined result of hard study, careful observation, and a fine natural gift. He has striven, too, and striven successfully, against the danger of drifting into one subject or set of subjects. He does not wish that the acute observer shall recognise his pictures by a mannerism. He does not wish to drift

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into the ranks of men whose work does not vary from year to year. At the present moment he has the idea of executing a very interesting series of subject pictures that will occupy him for a long time and afford scope for work that will be to some extent experimental. The Italian training seems to be making itself felt, even now after so many other influences have been experienced.

It is not only as a painter of big dramatic pictures that Mr. Solomon J. Solomon must be reckoned with. As a portrait painter he has achieved a large measure of success, and has been particularly happy in the treatment of some of his sitters. The picture of the great actress, Mrs. Patrick Campbell, attracted the attention and received the praise of the most discriminating critics; and while it was being painted Israel Zangwill was a frequent visitor to the artist's studio. Mrs. Campbell was not always a punctual sitter, and Mr. Solomon utilised his spare time in painting a very characteristic portrait of the novelist. The artist has been fortunate in the majority of his sitters; most of them have been men or women of more than average mental development, and their most characteristic attitudes and expressions have been recorded. If there is nothing audaciously clever in the portrait painting, it is never undistinguished; the composition is invariably clever, and the sitter's attitude and expression never fail to reveal to the observer something of his or her character. Israel Zangwill, Sir George Faudel Phillips, Colonel Goldsmid, and Mr. J. H. Levy have inspired the painter to some of his best efforts in portraiture—perhaps he is more successful in painting men than women. It would sometimes seem that the purely feminine side of a lady's portrait is over-emphasised, that the living, thinking woman is less than her frocks and frills.

Turning to the artist's best known works, one is struck by the keen appreciation for classicism and mediævalism. Had he lived in the days when pageantry was real and genuine, devised by artists and displayed before an art-loving people, he would have taken high place in any company. His tastes are quite catholic. The Bible and the Iliad serve alike to provide him with subjects. Now and again his brush brings back for us some brief glimpse of a golden age, or suggests for a space the Sicily of Theocritus, or some scene born of the days of knight-errantry. Even when he deals with modern subjects the treatment is inclined to be idealistic—his eye seeks for beauty and insists upon getting it. He could make a Lord Mayor's Show have something in common with a Roman general's triumph. Perhaps his long sojourn among the Masters, who

"SAMSON." BY SOLOMON J. SOLOMON, A.R.A.
From the picture in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

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"ECHO AND NARCISSUS." BY SOLOMON J. SOLOMON, A.R.A.

The large etching of this is published by Messrs. Clifford, Haymarket.

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KING CHARLES I. IN THE CITY.

From the painting by Solomon J. Solomon, A.R.A., in the Royal Exchange.

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"ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE CITY." BY SOLOMON J. SOLOMON, A.R.A.
Sir George Faudel Phillips, Lord Mayor.

only depicted the noble and dignified side of life, has given him the profound distaste for all that is ugly or sordid, though he has remained free from the sentimentality that has disfigured, or, at least, weakened, the work of certain followers of the beautiful, whose pictures have a quality that is so often summed up as "decadence."

Mr. Solomon is a robust and healthy worker and thinker, a man who prepares for the work of the studio by taking a canter in the Park, whose life is full of varied interests. No amount of hard study can make him a recluse or dull his interest in the many affairs that concern all branches of professional life. In part to his initiative the Jewish community owes the Maccabean Society, a plucky attempt to bring together professional Judaism in London for social purposes. He was its first president, and the greater part of the club's success is due to him.

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"NIOBE." BY SOLOMON J. SOLOMON, A.R.A.

These matters may seem to be beside the mark, but in truth they are not; we must look at a man if we would know his work. Turning to the pages of Vasari or Cean Bermudez for the lives of the great Masters of Italy and Spain, one notes that the best painters were strong, robust, fearless men, who worked strenuously and developed body as well as mind. Germany and Holland teach us the same lesson. Many of Europe's great painters were qualified by their gifts to shine in other spheres, not a few did. It would seem that a sense of the joy of life is no small part of the artist's equipment.

Turning to the pictures reproduced here, it must be remembered in the first place that photography is a poor medium for the representation of a picture's merits. Very often a photograph hardens and coarsens flesh painting, and by ignoring the colour makes the relative values false, by which I mean to say that the colour scheme may soften down a part of the picture that the camera renders all too prominently. In Mr. Solomon's work the colour is of great importance, but a photograph will give us no hint of it. In the picture "Waiting," which is reproduced here, the side light distracts the attention and is out of proportion, because the camera cannot deal with the canvas adequately, though it is no more than fair to Messrs. Dixon and Sons, the well-known photographers, to say that their work represents the best possible achievement of the camera.

In the picture "Your Health!" we see an animated group of diners drinking to the health of the late Dr. Ernest Hart. One seems to recognise among the guests Sir Benjamin Baker, Mr. Arthur Hacker, A.R.A., Mr. Forbes Robertson, Mr. Jerome K. Jerome, and other interesting folk. The grouping is natural and effective; the drawing, of the academic French kind, is very good; the weakness, if any, lies in the characterisation; the women are all alike—they might be sisters. Here again the clever effects of colour, the handling of the table lights is well-nigh lost in reproduction.

"The Blind Beggar," one of the painter's earlier works now published for the first time, is a very powerful piece of work. It presents a picture familiar enough to all who know Morocco and the Moorish ministration of justice. Some offence against the laws, perhaps an insignificant theft, has led to the deliberate blinding of the unhappy beggar who strays through the dark alleys of the city calling upon the true believers for the charity that "delivereth from death." Of all the pitiful sights that come to the traveller in Sunset Land, there is none more painful than this, and there are few more common.

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In every town, from Tanja of the Nazarenes in the north, to Marrakusha-al-Hamra in the south, one meets the blind men, sometimes sitting at the city gate like Bartimæus of old, at other times in the shadows amid the city's darkest corners, so silent and motionless that they seem to belong less to the living than to the dead. Only on the great market days do they face the sun in the outer Sôk and move among the wayfarers, crying for alms "in the name of Allah the One," and getting their greatest assistance from the poorest of the poor, who hand them a few filthy little copper coins called "flus," of which a handful are worth a penny.

"King Charles in the City" is a very brilliant piece of painting, a searching and final test of the painter's capacity for doing unfamiliar work well. The treatment is simple, yet dignified: the tendency to over-modelling that may be observed in some of the artist's work is happily absent; the composition and the brush-work are alike entitled to very high praise. It is a wall picture designed to fill a given space, but these limitations have not kept the artist from accomplishing a work that shows him at his best.

Photo by] [*Robinson, Redhill.*

MR. SOLOMON J. SOLOMON, A.R.A., AT WORK IN HIS STUDIO.

"On the Threshold of the City" is a work in which the painter triumphs over very many difficulties. It is no easy task to invest the Lord Mayor's Show with any special dignity—the City Father, the Justice, "in fair round belly with good capon lin'd," seldom lends himself to dignified treatment. Sir George Faudel Phillips, the Mayor on this occasion, happens to be a man in whom the physical traditions of the alderman are not preserved, and for once the group is redeemed from the commonplace. A realistic piece of work, photographic in some aspects, if you like, and treated on popular lines, but clever and pictorial.

"Samson," "Niobe," "Laus Deo," "Echo and Narcissus" are all specimens of the painter's most characteristic work, strong in literary and dramatic interest, painted with that interest well in mind, bold, vigorous, striking pictures with many admirable points. Under these circumstances detailed criticism is not called for. Their literary side is preserved, and that must suffice.

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THE CLARIONET PLAYER.

By BEATRICE HARRADEN.*

MONTH after month the clarionet player found his way to a certain street in the West End of London, and standing by the lamp at the corner of the pavement, began his recital. His tone was perfect; anyone hearing the unfailing rhythm of his phrasing would have known that he was no ordinary street musician. He came in all weathers—in the damp cold of the winter, and on the uncertain spring nights, and the long summer evenings, and was generally at his post any time between eight and nine. Month after month Janet Ravenscroft listened to him, and every time he came, the fixed sum of sixpence was sent out to him from the rich woman's house.

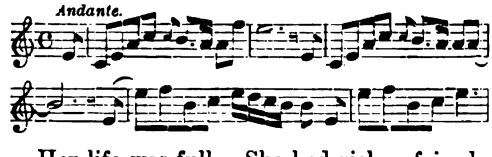
Sometimes he came when she was in the midst of a dinner party, engaged perhaps in listening to some interesting conversation, or herself talking with a really intelligent member of Parliament, or a distinguished traveller, or a successful playwright; for many persons of all sorts gathered together at her hospitable house. But whether she were hearing about our Imperial destinies, or the Russian peasant revolt, or the last new play, something in her memory became arrested when she heard the clarionet player; and she said to herself: "The clarionet player." Then she beckoned to the butler, who already knew what she meant, and she whispered to him: "Send out sixpence to the clarionet player."

It was an unwritten rule in the household that if she did not hear him, she was immediately to be told of his arrival. She had never given instructions to that effect, but her wishes on the subject were taken for granted. And so, even if she were holding a musical reception, and some well-known *artiste* were singing or playing, the butler would wait until the song or the piece was finished, and then he would step softly in and say to her: "The clarionet player, madam." She never gave more than sixpence, except at Christmas, when the sixpence became a shilling. And he always sent back some message of thanks. "Tell the lady that I feel her kindness very greatly," he said; and once he said: "Tell the lady that I should come oftener, but that I do not like to encroach on her kindness"; and once he said: "Tell the lady that I have been away in Margate, doing a pretty fair season."

That was all that ever passed between them month after month.

She had never seen him, had never asked to see him, and had never questioned her servant about him. She seemed to have no curiosity concerning him; so that her interest in him was evidently not personal. It was, indeed, a memory, nothing save a memory. For in the years which were gone, her husband—happily for her, now dead—had played the clarionet, had played it with skill and feeling, with rhythm and with poetry; and now, whenever she heard its mournful voice, her thoughts, in spite of themselves, wandered back to the time when the man whom she had loved, and who had used her cruelly, had lifted his instrument to his lips and had filled the air with the haunting tones characteristic of the clarionet.

And since this unknown musician was merely the embodiment of a memory, it did not concern her whether he were tall or short, dark or fair, of grave or gay bearing, a broken down ne'er-do-well, or merely a careless Bohemian who might have seen better days. Indeed, she scarcely took the trouble to identify the music which he played: the usual Irish songs, of which he seemed to prefer "Rich and rare were the gems she wore"; various airs and variations from Donizetti and other Italian masters, passages from Weber's "Clarionet Concertino"; several *tours de force* which showed off his skill as an executant, and many plaintive melodies, in the rendering of which he was always at his best. She scarcely noticed that he always began with the same melody. This was it:—



Her life was full. She had riches, friends, many interests, increasing as the years went on. She was fifty years old. Her face, still

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"The butler would step softly in and say to her: 'The clarionet player, madam.'"

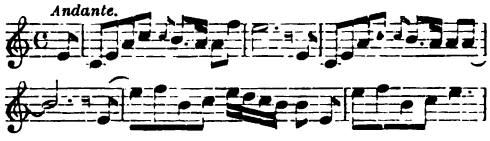
beautiful, bore signs of grief, and although she never referred to her married life, it was known that Mrs. Ravenscroft had endured bitter years of tragic suffering and unhappiness. When her husband died, disgraced and in a foreign land, she could only be thankful that she was free at last. She was obliged to change her name on coming into a large fortune unexpectedly, and she was thus able to alter her whole mode of life and to forget that fifteen years of marriage had been to her fifteen years of misery. She was considered metallic by most people; indeed, she gave out very little tenderness to anyone, and therefore received but little in exchange. Perhaps she had given all she had.

And then the clarionet player came. In the beginning she never thought of him except at the moment of his arrival and whilst he was playing. When he ceased playing and passed on his way, her re-awakened memories fell into lethargy once more, and she took up her new life as though nothing had occurred to disturb its continuity. But as time went on, she found herself thinking about him; and one day remembering that he had not been there lately, she said to the butler—

"Surely the clarionet player has not been here for some time?"

"No, madam," he answered, "not for several weeks."

But at last he came again. She heard with a sense of relief his preliminary trills and shakes and runs, and the plaintive melody:—



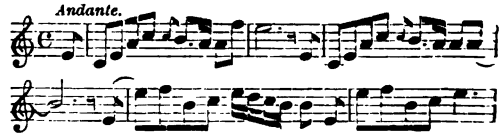
She sent a message of welcome out to him, together with the usual sixpence.

"Tell the clarionet player that I have missed him and his beautiful music."

The answer came back: "Tell the lady that I have been ill, but that I am well again."

One day she herself fell ill. It was a winter trying both for the rich and the poor. She was ill for many weeks, weeks of great loneliness; for in spite of her riches and her position, in spite of all her many interests and occupations, she was alone in the world. And her thoughts turned involuntarily to that unknown clarionet player. She longed to hear him. She began to wonder why she had never made inquiries about him, why she had never interested herself in his life and misfortunes, why she had let him come time after time, and go time after time, without even the slightest sign of personal sympathy. Then she began to excuse herself to herself, urging as a strong argument in favour of her attitude, that she had only erred on the side of wisdom. He was just a street musician, and she was a lonely, unprotected woman. It was better that she had erred on the side of wisdom.

At last he came again, eagerly waited for, although he did not know it, and she lay in her room listening more intently than ever before to his delicate phrasing. In the months that had passed, she had only listened half-heartedly, vaguely, distracted by her company and the circumstances of her life. But now she listened with all her heart and with all her hearing. That melody he was playing—*what was it?* She remembered now that he always began with it, and played it more beautifully than anything else. Why did he always begin with it? Ah! there was a world of sorrow and regret and longing in it. Was it the expression of his own feelings?



She sent out to ask the name of this beautiful, melancholy melody, and the answer came back: "Schumann's Third Romance for Oboe, arranged for clarionet."

A few more weeks passed, and she was still lying there, weak and ill, cut off from all her ordinary activities. And he came again.

For the first time an uncontrollable impulse seized her, and she felt she must see him. But at the moment when she reached the window and leaned out, she saw his tall form retreating down the street. She saw him put his clarionet in his pocket and go his own way. She stood for a moment lost in thought. He was tall, then. . . .

With the return of spring, strength came back to her, and one evening she was sitting in her boudoir, still alone, and full of many thoughts, when she heard the sweet opening notes of the Schumann Romance:—

She touched the bell, and the butler came.

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"The clarionet player was dead."

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"Tell the clarionet player that I should be pleased to see him, if he can spare me a few minutes," she said, in her grave way.

The well-trained servant showed no sign of surprise. After he had gone, she moved aside the curtain of the window and looked across to the other side of the road, where the clarionet player was standing, as usual, near the street-lamp. She was anxiously restless whilst she was waiting; those few minutes seemed to her like years. She laughed nervously at herself. "It must be because I've been ill," she said in excuse, "it is because I've been ill."

She went and stood against the mantelpiece and, resting her arm on the shelf, stared into the fire. The door opened, and the servant announced: "The clarionet player," and closed the door.

The musician came a few steps towards her, holding his clarionet in one hand and his hat in the other, with an old-world, easy grace and irresistible charm. There was a smile of gratified surprise on his pale but handsome face. He bowed and began in a soft voice—

"It is very good of you, madam, to wish to see me. I assure you I——"

Then he broke off suddenly as she turned round and looked at him.

"Good Heavens!" he cried, with a sudden change of voice and manner. "Why, it's Janet!"

She was still leaning against the mantelpiece, but her face had turned deadly white. Some words rose to her lips, but she could not give them utterance. She merely stared at him.

"Why don't you speak?" he said roughly. "I know you—I should know you anywhere—you're Janet, my wife Janet, with the same steely face and steely manner that used to madden me with irritation."

She gave no sign.

Then he threw himself down in the armchair, threw himself back recklessly, rudely, and laughed as though in a frenzy. And still she did not stir, standing as one paralysed. He waved his arms in the air and clasped them over his head.

"Good Heavens!" he cried, loosening them again and slapping his knees violently. "And to think you've only been sending me out sixpences! You living in this fine house here, and I a poor devil out in the street! Well, you have done me at last. To think you've only been sending me out *sixpences!*"

And he laughed, laughed. It was horrible to hear him. Suddenly he fell back and was silent, and his clarionet slipped to the ground.

Then she moved towards the chair and bent over him, and the stony expression of her face changed to a look of deep tenderness and longing and sympathy. The love which, as she believed, had died in her heart, sprang once more into flower when she saw again the husband whom she had loved, and who, so she had thought, was dead, and who had wrecked her life.

She bent over him and she put her hands on his shoulders.

"Oh, Ralph!" she cried, with a whole world of passionate love in her voice. "Oh, Ralph! if I had only known it was you, I should have sent out hundreds, hundreds—all I had—you know it—surely you know it! All I had—surely you know it, my Ralph. . . ."

There was no movement, no sound, for the clarionet player was dead.

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THE POWERS OF THE CROWN IN ENGLAND

AS EXERCISED DOWN TO THE BEGINNING OF THE PRESENT REIGN.

By the Right Hon. James Bryce, D.C.L., M.P.*

THE end of a long and glorious reign naturally suggests reflections upon the position which the Sovereign holds in the British Constitution, and indeed in the structure and working of the system of the British Empire as a whole. Queen Victoria's reign was not only the longest in our annals, and the reign which saw the greatest changes in our social and economic condition. It was also the reign in which the principles of the Constitution first became firmly settled in practice and definitely accepted by all sections and parties in the State. Many questions had remained doubtful down to the Reform Act of 1832 which were not formally, indeed, but virtually determined by that great measure. Yet the five years after 1832, during which William the Fourth was on the throne, were not sufficient to make the new position created by the reform of Parliament plain to the nation. This has been done during the reign of Queen Victoria, and done all the better because that period, although marked by many keen political struggles, has been one in which domestic peace and order have been scarcely at all disturbed.

All educated Englishmen know, though it is hard to make persons in other countries realise the fact, that in England, well settled as the position of the Crown is, its exact powers are not to be found described in any document. They have never been precisely defined, and, indeed, cannot be defined. No one can state positively just what they are now, though everybody knows that they are much more restricted than they were formerly. Seven hundred years ago the King of England had a power so great and wide that he might do pretty much what he liked so long as he did not provoke his subjects to rise in arms against him. He could make war and peace, issue ordinances, collect taxes, punish offenders, make all appointments. The only restrictions on his authority were that he had powerful vassals who might rebel if he treated them unjustly or cruelly, and that he was expected to respect the ancient customs of the country. One of these customs was that all the great men, earls and barons, bishops and abbots, were from time to time summoned to meet in council under the King and to advise him about the affairs of the country. When laws were enacted, they were made by the King in this council, with the consent of the great men there present. By slow degrees the Great Council so gained upon the King, and imposed such practical restrictions upon his powers, that when there arose, in the days of Charles the First, and afterwards of James the Second, a conflict between the Great Council and the King, the Crown got the worst of it. The Revolution of 1689 finally decided that the Crown cannot govern against the will of the Parliament, and limited in a variety of ways rights which Kings had previously claimed. The century and a half that elapsed

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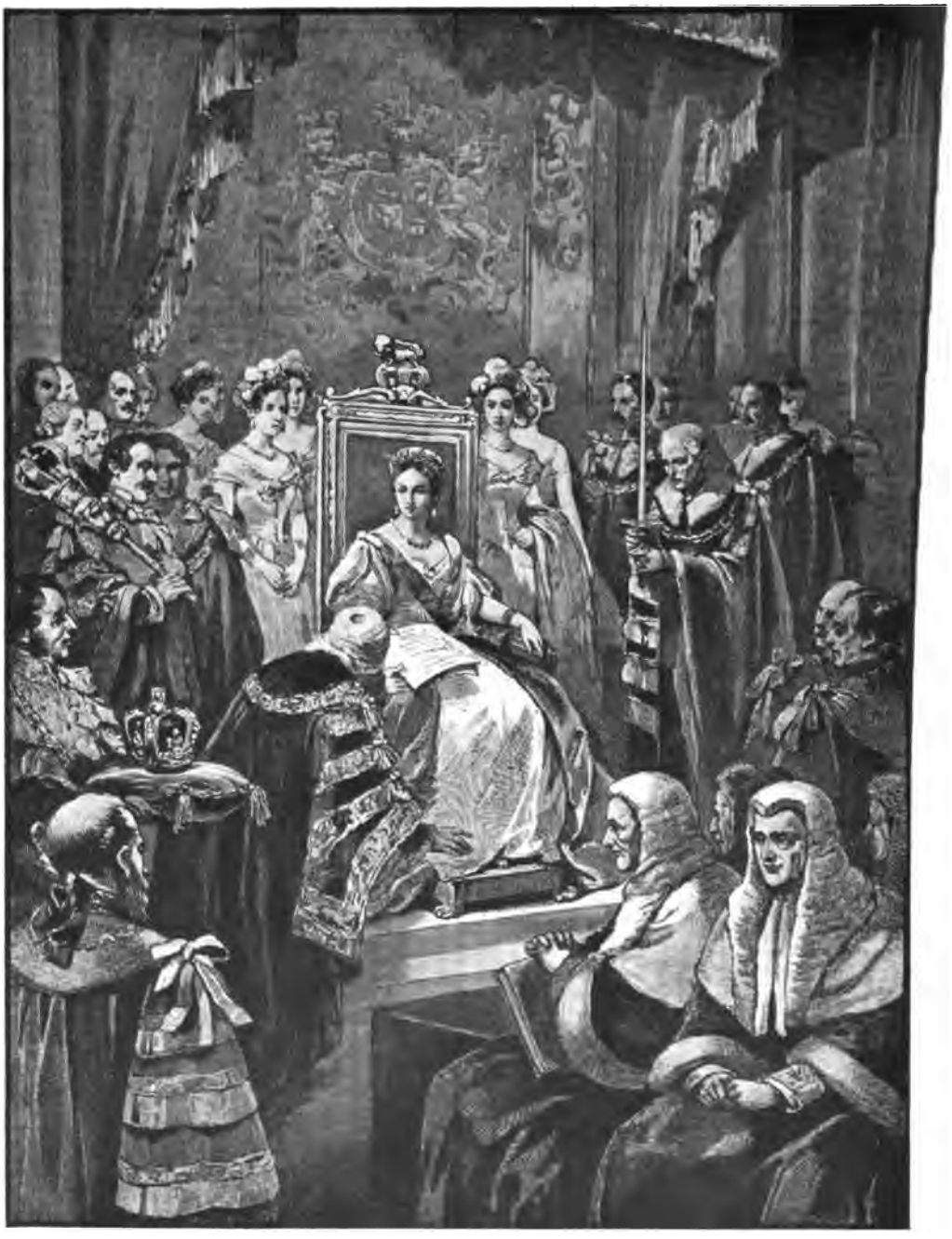

QUEEN VICTORIA OPENING HER FIRST PARLIAMENT.

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between the Revolution and the accession of the late Queen still further reduced the rights and functions of the Crown, making Parliament the sole legislative authority, and the body of ministers called the Cabinet, which holds office at the pleasure of the House of Commons, the virtual executive authority. But this process has been a gradual, a slow, and an irregular process; and it has generally been carried forward not by positively forbidding the Crown to do things it had formerly been recognised as entitled to do, but by establishing the principle that whatever action the Crown takes must be taken on the advice of ministers who are responsible to Parliament; so that the acts are really their acts, and not the Crown's. Thus the prerogative of the Crown, which is the name lawyers give to the Crown's rights as head of the Executive, has been for many purposes and in many directions kept alive. The difference is that the Sovereign has not in recent times exerted this prerogative on his (or her) own will and motion, but under the guidance of ministers who, though in point of form they take their orders from the Crown, do really act according to their own views, and in conformity with what they believe to be, or profess to believe to be, the wishes of the majority in the House of Commons. Accordingly, that power which at Queen Victoria's accession remained in the hands of the Sovereign, considered as an individual person, may to-day be described as being of the nature rather of influence than of legal power. Now, it is very hard to define influence, for it depends partly on the character and experience of the person who exerts it, partly on the submissiveness or receptivity of the person on whom it is exerted. Influence is not the same in the case of one sovereign or minister as it is in the case of another; and it may be greater or less according to the particular circumstances of the moment, including among these circumstances the popularity with the nation of the ministry (or of the Prime Minister in particular) who are conducting the affairs of the nation for the time being.

These things have to be stated in order to explain the somewhat vague language in which one has to describe the rights and functions—or, if the expression be preferred, the influence—of the Crown in England. Now, let us see in what this influence consists, and what part the Crown has, during the long reign which ended in 1901, played in the working of the British Constitution.

Originally the Sovereign chose all the ministers according to his own pleasure, just as the President of the United States chooses the members of his Administration. (I illustrate the position of the Crown by that of the American President, because the comparison between these two great States is that which has the greatest interest for the citizens of each.) Now, however, the ministers of the Crown must be persons who can command the support of the House of Commons, and must all belong to the dominant political party. And since the time of Queen Anne, the practice has very slowly grown up that the Crown, instead of choosing all the ministers, selects one prominent political leader and gives him the commission to form a Cabinet, by selecting colleagues to work with him. It may happen that some one particular statesman is so clearly marked out as the head of his party that there can be no doubt as to his being the proper person whom the Crown should select. When a new Ministry had to be formed in 1885, and again in 1886, and again in 1895, no one doubted that Lord Salisbury (who was then the leader of the Tory party) would be the person whom the Queen would "send for"—*i.e.*, commission to form a Cabinet. So Mr. Gladstone, as unquestioned leader of the Liberal party, was the inevitable person in 1868, in 1886, and in 1892. But sometimes there are several persons, any one of whom might possibly be able to form a Cabinet out of the party dominant in the House of Commons. Thus, in 1880, Lord Hartington was leader of the Liberals in the House of Commons, Lord Granville leader in the House of Lords, while Mr. Gladstone, although the most powerful personality in his party, had not been officially leading it since 1875. The Queen sent first for Lord Hartington, then for Lord Granville, and ultimately for Mr. Gladstone, who formed the Cabinet which remained in power till 1885. Now, cases may be imagined in which it would make a good deal of difference which of several possible persons was first "sent for" by the Sovereign, because the person who forms the Cabinet (popularly called the Prime Minister) may compose his Cabinet according to his own views, and naturally exercises a great influence in it as long as it lasts. Here, therefore, the views or personal preferences of the Crown may count. Moreover, although as a rule the members of the Cabinet are chosen by the Prime Minister according to his own judgment of their abilities or weight in the party,

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it may now and then happen that the Crown may consider some particular politician, whom the Prime Minister had not thought of, to be worthy of a post in the Administration, and the Prime Minister may defer to the wishes of the Crown—assuming, as of course may safely be assumed, that the politician was personally unobjectionable. This (one is told) did in fact happen during the Queen's reign.

As the Crown is deemed to choose, so the Crown may in theory dismiss its ministers. But in practice this has not been done during the last sixty years. If ministers lose the confidence of the House of Commons, they either resign, tendering their resignations through the Prime Minister, or else obtain the leave of the Crown to dissolve Parliament, in the hope of getting a new House of Commons which will support them. If it does support them, they hold on; if not, they resign. There are, however, some students of the Constitution who have argued that when the Crown is convinced that ministers do not possess the confidence of the nation (which, of course, implies that the House of Commons, in continuing to support them, does not possess that confidence), it may of its own motion dismiss its ministers and commission some statesman to form a new Administration. It would, of course, be necessary that in taking such a course the Crown should have first of all requested ministers to dissolve Parliament, and that it should feel sure that a man could be found who would be able to form a strong Administration. And those who advance the view I am stating admit that the only justification, from a constitutional point of view, of the course imagined would be that the dissolution of Parliament which would naturally follow, upon the coming in of a new ministry, should show, by producing a House of Commons prepared to support that new ministry, that the Sovereign's view of the political situation had been correct.

Whether such a power as this still remains to the Sovereign is one of these controverted points on which few will venture to speak positively. It may, however, be observed that the power (if still existing) has not been exercised for a very long time; and that it would be imprudent for the Crown to exercise it unless in a very exceptional case, where it was perfectly clear that the House of Commons had ceased to represent the real sentiment of the people, and that ministers were, in fact, disregarding the popular will. This is a highly improbable contingency, for a ministry would be unlikely to take a course so certain to bring general displeasure upon them.

The same remark applies to another case which has been put by those who like to carry a lamp into the dark places of that old and rambling edifice which we call the British Constitution. Is it consistent with the established use and practice of the Government of England for the Crown to refuse to its ministers permission to dissolve Parliament when they ask for such permission? Suppose that a ministry which has been defeated in the House of Commons believes that a General Election would give it a majority. Ought the Crown, as a matter of course, to assent to a dissolution? To refuse would practically be to dismiss the ministers, for they would, of course, forthwith resign. Here, again, it may be said that there has not been during the reign of Queen Victoria any authority in favour of the doctrine that the Crown might so refuse; and it may be added that nothing but the subsequent approval of a considerable majority of the nation could justify what would be, *primâ facie*, an unusual stretching of the functions of the Crown as they have been understood for many years past. Still, these cases are worth considering, unlikely as they are to arise, because they show that there is an undefined and scarcely definable margin extending beyond the ordinary and familiar duties of the Crown. Similar cases have arisen in some of the British self-governing Colonies, where the Governor holds a constitutional position which corresponds, in a general way, to that held by the Sovereign of the United Kingdom at home; and such cases have in these Colonies given rise to much debate. It is, however, generally held that Colonial usage has hitherto allowed a somewhat wider range to the Governor than has been claimed for the Crown at home. But it may be doubted whether in the Australian Commonwealth, for instance, any such wider range could be claimed for the Governor-General.

In the United States the policy of the Executive is determined by the President, and the Cabinet are only his advisers. In England it is the Cabinet that determine policy, and the Crown incurs no responsibility for it. Accordingly, whereas in the United States the President summons and presides over his own Cabinet, in England the Sovereign is never present at a Cabinet Council. It is, however, the duty of the Prime Minister to report to the Sovereign

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HIS MAJESTY KING EDWARD VII., WITH QUEEN ALEXANDRA, OPENING THE FIRST PARLIAMENT OF HIS REIGN, FEBRUARY 14, 1901.

From the picture by S. Begg.

all the decisions at which the Cabinet arrives, and thus to give the Sovereign not only the earliest information regarding the steps proposed to be taken, but also a proper opportunity for communicating to the Cabinet his (or her) views regarding those steps. So one may say that though the Crown has not since the days of George the Third claimed the power to direct policy, it has the right to be informed, to remonstrate, and to warn. Walter Bagehot, perhaps the most ingenious and suggestive of all those who have written upon the Constitution of England, has pointed out with singular force the opportunity for exercising an influence beneficial to the State which the power to advise opens up to a judicious and experienced occupant of the Throne. Bagehot observes that the Sovereign has three great advantages as an adviser. He is detached from party, and can therefore, if cool-headed and fair-minded, see facts as they are better than a party leader. His political experience, which may be longer than that of his Prime Minister, must have been cultivated by frequent intercourse with the ablest statesmen of the country. And, thirdly, his position is so high that his ministers must listen to him with respect and carefully weigh all he has to say. Queen Victoria, from her immensely large experience, from the dignity of her character, from the interest she took in the discharge of her duties, and from the spirit in which she approached them, did acquire no slight influence. The Crown, of course, does well never to obtrude such influence as it possesses, and is careful to abstain from pressure, seeing that inasmuch as responsibility rests not with it, but with its ministers, their freedom of judgment ought not to be interfered with. Power and responsibility must go together; and the stability of the British monarchy rests upon the doctrine that it is not responsible. Were the Crown to claim the right to take executive decisions, it could not be shielded from responsibility, and its position would become less secure.

There is one department of policy in which the Crown may be specially useful in rendering advice. That department is foreign affairs. The Sovereign has a more intimate knowledge of the reigning families of Europe than any minister can well have, and is probably related to not a few of them, as the English Royal House is to the rulers of Germany, Russia, Belgium, and Denmark, not to mention the minor German princes. Thus the Sovereign has special advantages for knowing the character and purposes of

some foreign rulers, and also for communicating with them in an unofficial way. The personal predilections or jealousies or resentments of most European monarchs do, no doubt, count for less in our time than they did two hundred years ago. But they still count for something; and moments occasionally arrive at which friction may be allayed or misunderstandings removed, or even warnings conveyed through the private communications of monarchs, when despatches from one Government to another would not have quite the same effect. Here, therefore, there is a field in which the Crown may, in the way of giving advice, exert a certain influence, not only as regards ministers at home, but even with foreign States, or at least such as are monarchically governed. It may be said that the latter kind of influence is open to abuse. The Crown might by private communications provoke as well as prevent a quarrel with some foreign potentate. This is true. But it must be remembered that any communication, not purely personal but of a political nature, ought, according to British constitutional practice, to be known to the Foreign Minister of the Sovereign who makes it and sent with the minister's approval. If the minister should deem it unwise, it would be his duty to dissuade it. And it need hardly be added that the cases are rare in which any such communications have been made or can usefully be made. Nevertheless, several are believed to have occurred during the reign of the late Queen, which the ministry of the day were glad that she should make, and whose results were helpful to the maintenance of European peace.*

One branch of the Crown's influence remains to be considered, that which relates to appointments to posts in the public service, civil, military, and ecclesiastical. Here, again, it is hard to say anything more definite than this, that although the responsibility for every appointment rests with some minister, and he is never permitted to relieve himself of, or even to reduce, that responsibility by pleading the wishes of the Crown, still if the Crown were to express a preference for one out of several persons equally or almost equally suitable for the post, that expression of preference would be likely to have weight. It would, of course, very rarely happen that any preference would be expressed, and the occasions when it was would be even less frequent as respects the civil service than as respects naval and military appointments or those which are made in the Established Church. The Army and Navy are by long tradition a little more closely connected with the Crown than is the Civil Service; and a similar tradition has preserved the right of the Sovereign to influence the choice for bishoprics—and especially, of course, for archbishoprics—of persons who enjoy his or her confidence. The same principle applies to the deaneries of Westminster and Windsor, both of which partake of the nature of private chaplaincies—of course, of a very dignified type—to the Monarch. It has frequently been stated by those who had good means of knowing, that the personal judgment of the late Queen was a principal cause for the selection (or non-selection) of particular persons to be prelates; and instances have been mentioned in which that judgment was proved by the result to have been eminently wise. There is no class of appointments which present more difficulties to a Prime Minister, nor any in which Prime Ministers have sometimes shown more lack of discrimination; so the advice of the Sovereign has been generally deemed—at least, by the great bulk of the laity of the Anglican Church—to have been judiciously given. It need hardly be added that in the conferring of peerages and of titles of honour, such as places in the orders of knighthood, opportunities are open to the Sovereign of expressing (of course, with the assent of ministers) his or her personal appreciation of meritorious services rendered.

The reader will have gathered from these observations that, although the influence of the Crown may be somewhat wider than is generally realised in England, it is much narrower than it is generally supposed in other countries to be, and in particular is narrower than most people in the United States believe, for in that country men are naturally led, by comparing the head of the British Executive with the head of their own, to attribute to the English Sovereign powers resembling those vested in their own President. Since the time when George the Third's illness prevented him from taking part in the affairs of State, and still more since A.D. 1832, when the great Parliamentary Reform Act made the will of the people the indisputably predominant

* Those who are curious regarding the position of the Crown as regards foreign relations will find, in Sir Theodore's Martin's "Life of the Prince Consort," an interesting account of the questions which arose between the Queen and Lord Palmerston when he was Foreign Secretary, in 1851.

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authority in Britain, the Monarchs of the United Kingdom have ceased to interfere with the ordinary conduct of public business. It is in the Prime Minister, or rather, perhaps, in the collective Cabinet, that the British parallel to the American President must be sought. Nevertheless, there is a sphere in which the influence of the Crown may still be exerted without infringing the rules and usages of the Constitution, so that it would be going much too far to say that the personal qualities of the late Queen did not make a difference to the well-being of the nation. They did make a difference, and not merely a social, but, though in a less marked way, also a political difference, for there were not a few occasions on which a want of judgment on her part would have caused serious trouble. But the influence which she exercised depended upon two things. One, of course, was the large measure of personal judgment and good sense which made that influence useful and respected. The other was the belief of the ministers, of Parliament, and, above all, of the people at large, that their Sovereign was thoroughly imbued with constitutional principles and had no wish or intent to go beyond the limits which established custom had assigned to her action. Her reign was, as has been already remarked, the first in which those limits had been pretty well settled, although even now some points may remain doubtful. And one reason why the late Queen secured a reverence and, indeed, an affection from the whole nation such as can scarcely be paralleled from earlier days, was because the nation has so fully believed that she thoroughly understood and had been invariably faithful to the doctrines of the Constitution regarding her own position. Thus one result of her reign was to give the monarchy a hold upon the respect and confidence of the whole people which it had not enjoyed for many generations.

It has not been necessary to refer to the British Colonies or to India, because the functions of the Crown in relation to these external dominions are, like its other functions, exercised through responsible ministers. But I must not omit to add that, for the purpose of maintaining a political tie between the Mother Country and her Colonies, it has been a great advantage to Britain to have in the Crown a visible embodiment and symbol of the unity of the British people all over the world. In this respect the monarchy has proved eminently valuable. No President, elected by the inhabitants of the United Kingdom, could effect what is effected by the descendants of Kings who reigned over the peoples of England and Scotland when those peoples were still confined within the narrow limits of an island. And the power of this tie has been strengthened by the feelings entertained throughout the Colonies for Queen Victoria, who had been the most conspicuous and respected figure in her Empire during a period the beginning of which few among her subjects could remember.

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UNSOLVED.

By IAN MACLAREN.*

No. I.—THE CLASH OF DISHES.

WE were living, a large and pleasant company, in a shooting-lodge at the head of a Highland glen, and conversation had turned one evening after dinner on the supernatural, and every man—for the women would not commit themselves—had declared with the slightest flavour of ostentation that he did not believe any nonsense of that kind. Conversation drifted away to the sport of the day, to the prospects of to-morrow, to a picnic at a certain romantic spot where the women were to join us, and to every kind of gossip. When the men had gathered in the smoking-room, which was panelled in black oak and lay largely in the shadow, and the circle round the fire had lit their favourite pipes and stretched out their legs with the satisfaction of men who have done a hard day's work and now are at ease, someone turned back on the talk in the drawing-room. It was, in fact, the minister of the Glen, who often stayed in that lodge between Sundays, and who, being a Highlander and still a lad in years, was touched with the romance of superstition, and would have gone then—as, indeed, an old man now, he would still go—twenty miles to hear a ghost story. He had the idea that every man has at least one experience in his life, and he may have more than one, which he cannot explain on natural grounds and which therefore remains unsolved. When he put forward this view as a mere suggestion, and carelessly struck a match as if the subject were of no importance, a writing man murmured, as he watched the smoke go up to the ceiling, that he rather thought there was something in it, and a veteran from the Indian frontier looked at the lighted end of his cheroot and declared he half believed it. Then the minister, in his eager, boyish fashion, younger by far than any man present, made a proposal with fear and trembling. The company would be in that lodge unbroken for over fourteen days, which meant fourteen nights in the smoking-room, and it might be a wet day or two in the gun-room; and men, to say nothing of women—if, indeed, women should have part or lot in such a matter—could not talk for ever about grouse. Why should not each man describe—for the passing of the time, simply that—anything which had happened to him and which he could not trace to its cause? And each man was to tell his tale upon the understanding that it was not to be taken for granted that he believed in the foolishness of ghosts; that he was not to adorn the tale with any picturesque circumstances for the amusement of his auditors; that he was at the same time to let us know what he had been doing before this thing happened, and what he had been thinking about, and not to hide anything which might indirectly account for the impression produced upon him; and, lastly, that we were not to worry ourselves with arguing about the solution, but simply accept the tale as the account of something which the narrator believed had taken place, and which he had described exactly as it seemed to him. And as the minister had started the idea, it was insisted he should lead the way; so he told them what had befallen him one night last winter—not because it was the only unexplained incident in his life, for he was a Highlander, but because it was the latest.

"The date," began the minister, "was a Saturday in December, and I had been visiting a sick case five miles from the Manse. I left the farm about three o'clock in the afternoon, and the darkness had fallen when I was a mile from home. There was also a slight mist, making it impossible to see more than a few yards ahead. As I was coming along the high road between trees, and where it was rather darker than usual, I heard someone running, apparently through the fields, and at right angles to me, and from the increasing sound I concluded he was approaching me. In ordinary circumstances I would not have thought much about the matter, for there is no danger to anyone by night or day in the Glen, and a highwayman would be incredible.

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But the police at our county town had recently warned us that some dangerous criminals, who had committed a burglary with violence, were hiding in Perthshire, and that there was some reason to believe that they had taken work as unskilled labourers in our slate-quarries up on the hillside. Our solitary police-constable was told to keep an eye on any strangers, and if he could get sufficient evidence, to make an arrest, and for the first time in the memory of living man we had been snibbing our windows and locking our doors. A man running across a field as if to intercept one therefore suggested danger, and I stopped and turned in the direction from which he was coming. There was a hedge at the side of the road rising out of a slight bank, and over that hedge the man would have to climb. In less than a minute he was on the other side of the hedge, whoever he might be, and I saw his figure for the first time when he leapt on to the bank. A tall, strongly built man was all I can say about him; his face in the darkness and at the distance of some six yards I could not identify. Standing on the height, he threw up both arms as a man would do to stop a train, and cried in a low, clear voice: 'Halt!' and I thought he was about to leap down; but he remained with his arms still raised on the other side of the hedge, a weird figure, half veiled in the darkness, yet faintly outlined by a faint light.

"'Who are you, and what do you want?' I replied, facing him from the road. 'I am the minister.'

"'The minister,' he said, with the same penetrating voice, 'the minister.' Then his arms fell, he jumped backwards, and began to run away as rapidly as he had come, and in a minute or two the sound of his footsteps had ceased and everything was again silent.

"On Monday I visited the farm to which the field belonged, and whose house was the only one near the spot, and I cautiously questioned them whether any stranger had come to their door or passed in their hearing on Saturday evening. They had seen no one and heard nothing, and I discovered that it could not have been any person belonging to their own household. So the man who ran across the field and stood upon the bank was not accounted for. But of course I am not suggesting that there was anything supernatural about him or his coming. Whoever he was, or whatever he wanted, he was a living man, and I only mention the incident because it may have shaken my nerves, and because it will help you to understand why I anticipated something might happen that night. When I arrived at the little village, and before going to the Manse, I called at the constable's and asked him whether there were any news about our suspects. He said that he was only waiting till Monday, when he believed the men would come down to the village in the evening for their stores, to arrest two men who he was convinced were the fugitives, and on that occasion he would require the aid of some of the young fellows, as he expected a fierce resistance. I asked him whether they had done any mischief in the Glen, or whether there had been any complaint. He said that he had heard of nothing, and that he was not afraid of their doing any injury, because that would be simply giving themselves away, and would lead to instant capture, which seemed a very reasonable view, but it left my running man a somewhat eerie mystery. They were arrested on the Monday evening as they were leaving our public-house, and resisted so fiercely that the constable required the aid of four of our young fellows before they were bound hand and foot and placed in a cart to be taken down to Muirtown. I was present at the arrest, but could not identify either as the man of Saturday, nor could I recognise the voice.

"It seemed to me best to say nothing to my housekeeper about the bad characters who were supposed to be in the district, because in my absence she had to live alone in the Manse, and although the nearest house was only the space of a garden away, there was a high wall between, and the only communication was through our grounds and round by the church. We were practically without neighbours, and that evening, as I came in beneath the trees whose leafless branches touched the porch of the church, and by the side of a high fir hedge, and along the garden walk, I may confess that I looked round more than once in the darkness, half expecting to see a figure in the shadow and to be again summoned to halt. As I am accustomed to be on the road and to cross the moor and to come through our woods at every hour both of the day and night, you must not think me a timid townsman, or one to be thrown into a panic at the incidents of country life—say, when an owl hoots close beside you; or a bird rises at your foot on the hill; or the shape of a Highland cattle beast looms suddenly out of the darkness; or, as happened one night,

a keeper springs out of a ditch and demands your name, thinking that at last he has caught one of our clever poachers. A new sense of danger had taken hold of my imagination. I realised how lonely the Manse was, and how many hiding-places there were among the trees and bushes of its garden. When I stood on the doorstep, I was conscious of looking round to see if I had been followed; and when I found myself beside the lamp in the little hall, and knew that the door was between me and anyone among the trees, I had for the first time in my life a sense of relief from physical fear. It struck me at dinner that my housekeeper was fidgeting with the dishes and seemed ill at ease. After a little she asked me whether I had heard that some burglars were hiding at the slate-quarries, and that the Glen had been warned to take care of their houses. I said that I had been told something of the kind, but made light of the warning, only I added that it might be as well to see that the doors were locked and the windows latched; but I rather laughed at the whole affair, pointing out that there was very little worth stealing in a manse, and that we ourselves would be rather difficult to carry away. As I had been engaged that Saturday in visitation, my sermon was not yet written (for young ministers are always behind with their work, changing and rechanging to the last hour), and after dinner I sat down for a few hours' work at my writing-table in the study. This would be between eight and nine o'clock, and here again I think it fair to point out that before the thing happened, whatever it was, I had four hours' hard brain work, which, as you may take it, either proves that I was in a perfectly alert and self-possessed state of mind, or, on the other hand, that I was overwrought and excited.

"About ten o'clock the housekeeper brought in a glass of milk, which I was accustomed to take before going to bed, and she asked me whether I wished that she should, as usual, take my black-and-tan terrier, who spent the evening with me in the study, out to the stable, where he slept with the big retriever. 'Where else,' I asked, 'was he to go?' and then she hinted in a roundabout way that I might like to have him with me in the house. He was the gamest dog I ever had, and would face up to any beast or any person, and I knew that he could put the fear of death on tramps and such-like in a way which had often cheered my housekeeper's heart. So I rather chaffed her upon being afraid of the burglars and wishing to have him in her own room; but I was concerned to notice that, although she was one of the coolest women I ever saw, and used to remain cheerfully alone in the Manse a fortnight on end when I was on holiday, she was shaken and seemed to have an apprehension of something going to happen. I was not particularly anxious to go out to the stable myself, but it was better that I should go than that she should be scared, so I took Jack out; but instead of going by the front door and round by the garden, I went through the kitchen and out at the back door. I left the kitchen door open, and crossing to the stable I kept an eye upon it, for (I am telling everything to show one's state of mind) it occurred to me that if a man were hiding near by, he might go in when my back was turned and hide somewhere in the house. As soon as Jack was in the stable and I had heard the retriever give him a warm welcome, I went into the house without sauntering through the garden as on another night I might have done, for even in winter a turn in the garden with your pipe is a good preparation for bed. When I came in, I locked and bolted the kitchen door, and then I went through the house, fastening all the windows and seeing that the house was really empty, except for the housekeeper, who had now gone to her room, and myself. Then I returned to the study and began to work again upon a sermon which was rather refractory. This would be about half past ten, and by eleven o'clock I was immersed in my subject.

"Perhaps I had better explain at this point the geography of the Manse, in order that you may understand how I heard what I heard, and how I went where I went. The study was on the right hand of the front door as one entered, and the dining-room on the left, with a passage between from which the staircase started for the upper floor. At the end of this passage there was a door, a little further on another door, which two doors shut off the kitchen premises from the rest of the house; and these premises consist of a kitchen directly behind the study, behind the dining-room a large pantry, and then beyond the kitchen a scullery, with a servant's bedroom opening out of the scullery. This room has a window looking on the garden, and a fixed bed; but as it is a dreary, damp little hole, my housekeeper uses one of the four bedrooms upstairs which complete, with a number of cupboards, the

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"'Who are you, and what do you want?'"

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accommodation—for the Manse is a bachelor's house. Between the study and the kitchen where it happened, there was, therefore, only an inner wall—but it was, according to the fashion of building in the Glen, very substantial—and sitting by my study fire, I could not hear any sound in the kitchen unless it were something quite abnormal. Twelve o'clock rang out on a grandfather's clock in the passage just when I was writing the last words of the sermon, and I reckoned that it would take me half an hour to correct, and then I might go to bed with a clear conscience. A little later there was a sound as if someone were tapping on the study window opposite where I was sitting, and I laid down my pen and looked at the back of the shutters—for I forgot to mention that, for the first time, I had that night closed all the shutters on the lower floor. Yet through the shutter came distinctly the sound of something, sometimes scratching the glass, and sometimes flipping it. I went over to the shutter and heard the sound at intervals still more clearly, and then considered whether I should put out the lamp and open the shutter, or whether I should go quietly out through the front door and come upon—well, whatever was doing this, from the outside. Then it came to me what a fool I was, for a branch of the rose tree which covered the south wall of the study was hanging loose, and when the wind was in a certain quarter flapped upon the window. I mention this alarm, as I have told about the burglars, simply to show that I was nervous and expectant, and when I walked over to the fireplace to get some tobacco, the hand of the little clock on the mantelpiece stood at 12.20. I lit my pipe and was turning over the concluding passage in my sermon, before going to correct it at the table, when I heard the sound, and now I have come to what did happen. And one thing is perfectly certain: standing on the hearthrug and considering how I should shape my last sentence (a young minister is much concerned about such things), I was absolutely awake and in possession of my faculties.

"What I heard in an instant and in the stillness of the house was a sound which can be distinguished from every other, and can, as far as natural causes go, be created only by one means. It was a loud and ringing clash, which occurred once and then was followed by silence. I took the pipe out of my mouth and stood at attention. Everything was quiet, so that I could hear the ticking of the clock in the lobby and a mouse squeaking behind the skirting-board. As regards the explanation of the sound, I had not the slightest doubt; I knew, as I then supposed, what had made it and who had caused it. It could only have come from the fall of one or more pieces of metal, and from the quarter of the sound, as well as from the fact that that was the only place where there was such metal, they had fallen upon the kitchen floor. Either a number of tin dish-covers had been thrown off from the wall and descended on the stone flags, or else—and this was what I thought more likely (for my mind was working with much rapidity and I was laying out the scene)—a large meat-jack—for such things were a portion of kitchen equipment in the 'seventies—had been knocked over with violence. Nor had I the slightest doubt who had done this, and how he had come to do it. The warning of the county police had not been a mere scare, and the poverty of the Manse had not been an absolute security. Our burglary had come, and we were going to have an adventure. They had opened the kitchen window—which could easily be done, for it was level with the garden—had turned back the shutters, and then one of them had climbed into the kitchen, but had done so in such a careless fashion that he had either jerked off some dish-covers from the wall near the window—which was, however, unlikely—or had upset the meat-jack, which, being much in use, stood close to the window; and I took for granted that this was really what had been done. On the other side of the wall, a few feet from me, were the burglars.

"Standing still upon the hearthrug—and with only this difference of attitude: I turned my back on the fire and faced the door—I considered the plan of campaign. Should I go out by the front door and round to the village to secure the help of the constable and some of the men, in which case, if we were quick, we might take the burglars in the rear and capture them gloriously? Or should I face them myself and trust to good luck, not for their capture, which would be impossible with one man against two—for I took for granted there would be two—but for their hurried retreat, in which case I should then rouse the village, and if we did not capture them that night, they would be taken in the morning. I decided against the former plan, because the front door could not be opened without a jarring noise that rang through the house; because they would almost certainly leave one outside at

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"The meat-jack stood as erect as ever."

the window, and he would almost as certainly hear my footsteps in the garden; and also because I did not like the idea of leaving the housekeeper even for a few minutes with those ruffians, lest she should come downstairs and fall into their hands. It seemed necessary that I should deal with the burglars myself, and I wished that moment that I possessed a revolver, although—and I mention this to show that I was not over-excited—I thought it very likely the revolver would be as dangerous to myself as to the burglars. Yet I judged that it certainly would have impressed them, and I resolved to purchase one on my first visit to Muirtown. As I had none that night, I decided to take the biggest stick in the lobby as I passed, and this was my plan of campaign: To put out my study lamp, so that its light might not shine into the lobby and place me at a disadvantage if I had to retreat that way; to open the study door as quietly as possible, and to go down the darkness of the lobby on tip-toe; and then to open the two doors between the lobby and the kitchen with as much commotion as I could make; so that when I rushed, not at too great a pace, into the kitchen, I should find one of the burglars outside, and the other making his way through the window, and perhaps giving me an opportunity of identification.

"While my hand was on the handle of the study door and I was gently turning the lock—for I was great in the idea of not scaring them till I was almost upon them—the clash was repeated, and this time seemed to ring through the house, dirling and reverberating as if not one but half-a-dozen meat-jacks had been dashed upon the floor. The invaders had stood still for a minute or two—so I argued—and then, blundering about the kitchen, they had swept down the covers upon the meat-jack. Perhaps one of themselves had fallen, to complete the catastrophe, and now, with such a noise about their ears, even professional burglars would be panic-stricken. It struck me even at that moment, however, that skilful craftsmen would not be likely to play the fool with clashing cymbals after this fashion, and that if these were the men, they must be hopelessly drunk. Everything was quite still again as I tip-toed down the passage, but as I stood opposite the first door I was conscious of a certain dread for which the burglars did not account. There was not the slightest sound from the kitchen, no whispering, no shuffling, no moving of anything. I was conscious of an almost

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irresistible desire to leave the whole matter alone, to rush upstairs and lock myself in my bedroom. For what? Because a couple of rascals had broken into the kitchen and were trapesing among the tin dishes. I pulled myself together, tore the first door open, shouted 'Who's there?' wrenched the second open, and burst into the kitchen—to find it in perfect order and empty of any human being!

"The fire was still burning and casting its light through the kitchen. Standing in the doorway and looking round, I saw at a glance that the shutters were untouched, that the dish-covers were in their places, that the meat-jack stood as erect as ever. The doors into the scullery and pantry were closed, everything was in perfect order. Was it possible that the burglars, after the second alarm, had in the space of a minute or so put everything right, gone out through the window, and drawn the shutters after them? I walked over to the window, discovered that the little bolt was in its place, and also—what I had not noticed before—that a small plant was standing on the ledge of the window. If it had been possible for skilful workmen at their trade to re-bolt the shutters from the outside, which would certainly have been a feat of dexterity, not even an Indian juggler could have placed a flower-pot close up to the shutters where the halves met. No one had come through the window, and therefore no burglar was likely to have thrown down the meat-jack. But perhaps I had assumed too hastily that they had entered through the kitchen window; they may have been able to squeeze themselves through the smaller windows of the other rooms, and they might now be either in the scullery or the pantry. I lit the candle, and was conscious as I did so of keeping a watchful eye on the closed doors; and then I explored the pantry. Nobody there; and the window—which, by the way, had a perforated zinc covering—was absolutely intact. If they were anywhere, they must be in the scullery or in the servant's bedroom; and when I entered these recesses, I felt a chill at my heart which I do not think was due to fear of any man, for by this time I was beginning to despise the burglars, or perhaps really to doubt their existence. The scullery was empty; and then I opened the door of the bedroom, and shivered—not, I want to say at once, on account of anything I saw, for the whole contents of the little room were the wooden framework of the bed and a couple of empty boxes which had been stowed away there to utilise the space. The window was not only closed, but was protected within by a spider's web, and although I believe history has shown in a romantic case that this does not prove no one had gone that way a short while before, it was sufficient evidence for my purpose. Whatever had caused the clash, it was not burglars; and if so, what was it?

"Standing in the room, I was conscious of a feeling which I may describe as a mixture of curiosity and dread. Without any reason to go upon, and without, indeed, reasoning about the matter at all, I appeared to have felt, as by an instinct, that if any solution of the clash could be found, it would be in that bedroom. Why, I did not know then and do not know now. Holding up the candle, I examined the walls, which were unpapered and streaked with damp; the bed, whose woodwork was beginning to decay; the floor, which was of earth, with a strip of planking in front of the bed. There was certainly nothing mysterious and nothing hidden in that room, and yet I felt in my heart that I would rather have met twenty burglars than slept in it for a night. While I was examining the room again, I heard a sound, and immediately blew out my candle, for it was a stealthy footstep in the kitchen. After all, I had been outwitted, for I had forgotten that there was a door out of the pantry into a little passage which came in between the two doors that divided the lobby from the kitchen. Whoever had been in the kitchen had dodged round behind my back, and now was between me and my base; or was the footstep like the clash, and was I to-night the subject of a sustained delusion? By this time I was getting angry, like one who is playing Blind-man's-buff and is being touched on every side by unseen people. Holding the candle in my hand as a life-preserver, for I had laid down the stick on the bed, I wheeled into the kitchen and found myself face to face with flesh and blood at last, for my housekeeper, in light undress, was standing just within the kitchen doorway.

"She was not young and, as I said before, she was not nervous, but terror sat upon her face, and it was to her credit that she did not faint as I came out, candlestick in hand.

"'What is it, sir?' she whispered rather than said, and then she explained that she also had heard the clash, and thought, like myself, that the burglars had come at last. She rose and listened, not knowing whether I were in

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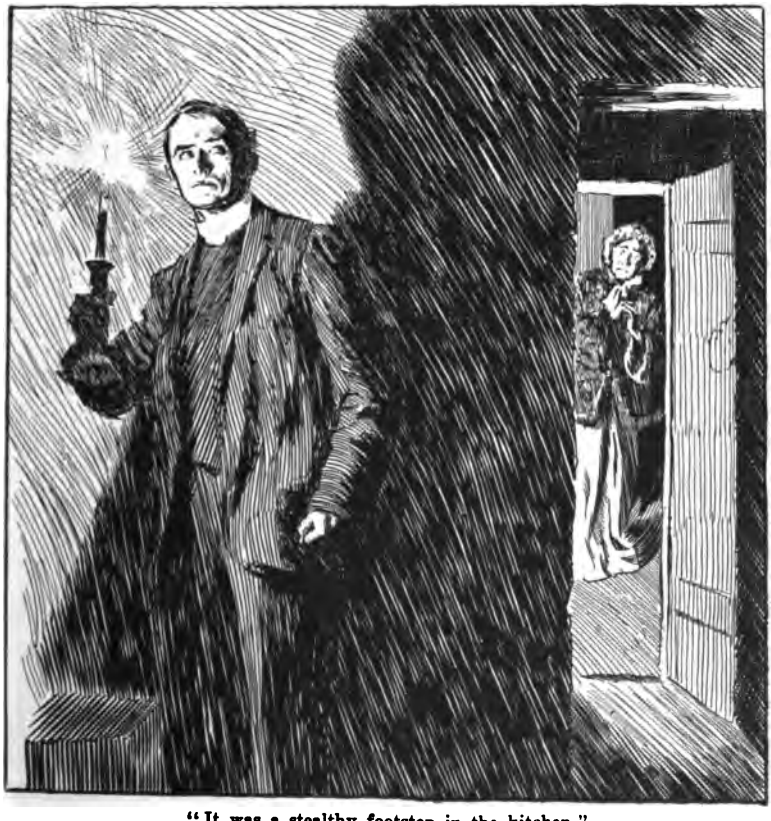
bed or in the study, and then had heard me go into the kitchen and had waited anxiously for what would happen. The housekeeper had, indeed, come down part of the stairs in order to give assistance if she could be of any help, and now she had begun to take in the situation.

"'Have you seen nobody, sir? What is it?'

"My first idea was to pretend that there had been nothing, and that it was all a false alarm; but she was too shrewd a woman to be deceived, and too sensible to be treated as a child. I admitted that there was a mystery somewhere, but suggested that she had better go to bed again, and prophesied that we should not be troubled in the same way again that night. Before lying down myself—for I did not take off my clothes, in spite of all I said to Margaret—I went through the whole house, into every corner of it except the housekeeper's room, opening cupboard doors, exploring the recesses of wardrobes, and looking under the beds, simply to satisfy myself that no person was concealed in the house, and that we were not being befooled by any human agency. As I expected, we were not disturbed again, and, I may as well add, have never heard the clash of dishes since.

"During Sunday I had enough to do with my own work, without trying to solve our mystery; but on Monday morning, when the snow was falling heavily and visitation was almost impossible, I wrought upon the problem with all my might; but only arrived at the following somewhat disappointing conclusion—that I was in full possession of my faculties when I heard the noise; that it took place in the kitchen, and could only have been caused by the fall of tinware; that no tinware had fallen, or that it had been immediately replaced; and, therefore, as it had been immediately replaced, and no one was to be found in the premises, there was no natural cause to account for the incident. When I came to seek for a cause outside the natural, I could only speculate, but my mind turned at once to that little room, partly because it was so dreary, partly because I had been so affected by its atmosphere. I examined it again, and this time with the utmost care, and in doing so I found that there was a slight space, not more than the eighth of an inch, between the rough wood panelling at the top of the bed and the wall. As it was hanging loose, I forced it off with a chisel, and was rewarded for my pains by finding a scrap of paper, faded and mouldy, which I took to the study and spread out very carefully. It seemed to be part of a letter, with the beginning and end removed, and it read as follows:—



"It was a stealthy footstep in the kitchen."

"'. . . . do not betray me, for it would be ruin at the beginning of my career. Wait till Wednesday night, when I shall come, if I can get away from an engagement

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in Muirtown. Leave the kitchen window unlatched, and remove those confounded tin dishes, or the minister will hear in his room above. If you dare . . . .' So it ended.

"The letter had lain in its hiding-place for many a year, and now it threw only a faint light upon the past and present. Twenty-five years before, the minister was a man well up in years, and his sister kept house for him. Their servant was the last that used that room, and I learned, by very cautious inquiry, that she was a good-looking girl, and that one morning she was found dead in bed. The cause of death was not very clearly known, but it was supposed to have been failure of the heart. And the only thing that was heard during the night was the fall of some dishes in the kitchen. The sound awoke the minister, but as he heard nothing more and was an elderly man, he went to sleep again. It was supposed that she had risen to get a light, and had knocked the dishes over by mistake, and that then she had crept back to bed and died. It was four-and-twenty years ago that happened, and no one can tell anything more about the matter. Was it a love affair? Who was the man from Muirtown? Did he come that night? Did he give her some quick poison, or did she die in the excitement of farewell? Was it he who overthrew the dishes that night? Is he dead now himself, and did he come back to rehearse the tragedy? That is all." said the minister, refilling his pipe.

IN A FAR COUNTRY.

WILL you take me back again,
Hills and woods I knew of old?
Will you take me back again,
With my sorrow and my stain,
Will the old-time love still hold?

Will you make me whole again,
Silent hills and sunny land?
Broken dreams I bring to you,
Who the first young rapture knew,
Will your pity understand?

Will you fold me close again?
For I'm wearying to come;
Just to lay me on your breast,
In your quiet and your rest,
Like a child—come home.

ARTHUR KETCHUM.

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"At Christmas be merry, & thank-
-ful withal,
And feast thy poor neighbours, the
great with the small;
Yea all the year long, to the poor
let us give,
God's blessing to follow us,
whiles we do live."

Thomas Tusser. 1557.

A.L. Bowley.

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WRESTLING.

By GEORGE HACKENSCHMIDT,
WORLD'S CHAMPION.

Illustrated from photographs by Messrs. Foulsham and Banfield, in which the wrestlers are Messrs. George Hackenschmidt and F. Gruhn.

IT was only natural that the ancients, who valued form and strength above everything, should have placed wrestling high among athletics as rendering men graceful, robust, and capable of endurance.

There are many stories of the enthusiasm with which victorious wrestlers were greeted at the public games. The men among the audience shouted and cried; the women took off their jewels and hurled them into the arena. It was the custom to place the victor in a chariot drawn by horses of the finest breed, and drive him up and down before the admiring spectators. The hero must have cut a fine figure in his tunic embroidered with flowers, proud beneath the crown given for the exploits of the day, and carrying a palm in his right hand, while a thousand voices shouted his name aloud. Nor was his triumph fleeting. Poets, sculptors, and painters placed his great deeds on record. Of presents he had enough and to spare. The directors of the games gave him slaves, armour, vases; and kings heaped jewels on him. When he returned home, there was no extravagance which his native place would not incur to honour him. Splendid triumphal arches were erected, and in many cases city walls were pulled down in order that the wrestler might have room for his procession of musicians, dancers, and priests bearing emblems of immortality.

"Ye shall be as gods!" was certainly true of these famous athletes. The State supported them during their lifetime, and at their death mourned their loss as a public calamity. Their memory was kept green by festivals, and future ages were called upon to emulate their feats and virtues.

All this may seem the height of folly to modern reason; but for the most part the moderns are ignorant of the high philosophy and the fine influence on the race which this adoration of strength symbolised. One of the chief causes which led to the Greeks and Romans becoming rulers of the world was that the rewards and honours bestowed on the successful athlete raised up thousands eager to emulate his achievements, and so created a race of powerful fighters and defenders. The city which razed its walls to welcome the wrestler home was not committing wanton damage. It was expressing eloquently the fact that heroes are better for defence than all the ramparts ever built. When the young men of antiquity gave themselves up to athletics, it was not from greed of gain, but from hope of glory—the glory symbolised by the crown of wild olive, of pine, or of laurel.

F. Gruhn. G. Hackenschmidt.

I.—THE USUAL FIRST GRIP.

From the earliest times wrestling formed

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part of the Olympic games, and we are told that Hercules wrestled with Antæus, and Theseus with Cercyon. Many other celebrated combats have been described for us by ancient poets and historians, notably by Homer in the "Iliad" and Virgil in the "Æneid." Ovid, in the "Metamorphoses," gives a vivid picture of the struggle between Hercules and Achelous, and Lucan, in the "Pharsalia," of that between Hercules and Antæus, and many more examples from classic writers might be quoted.

In course of time the science of wrestling fell into disrepute, the day of the great wrestlers came to an end, and of the Coliseum at Rome only a ruin remained. This process of decay was so rapid that very soon professional wrestlers occupied no better positions than acrobats of doubtful morality with whom people of ordinary culture hesitated to associate. The wrestler was, indeed, so far outside the pale that he could only earn a precarious livelihood by exhibiting his skill in travelling shows held in barns or hastily erected tents. So a race of men once worshipped as demi-gods came to be treated as pariahs by a degenerate and emasculate society, and one of the most ancient and famous of athletic sciences was degraded to the level of a galanty show.

The reaction was long in coming, but it came at last. About five years ago a few generous-minded men, loving sport for sport's sake, banded themselves together with the object of reviving wrestling as a science. Their names were De Luccuski, editor of the *Journal des Sports;* Louis Delmer, president of the Fédération Athlétique in Belgium; the Comte de Ribeaupierre, president of the Cercle Athlétique at St. Petersburg; and Franz Reichel, on the staff of the *Figaro* and the *Vélo*. These were the men who brought the wrestlers out of their barns, off their pavement carpets, and placed them before the public in a manner worthy of their great traditions. Thanks to these five enterprising men, wrestling championships were founded all over the Continent, arenas were built, and a journal founded devoted entirely to wrestlers and wrestling, known as *The Biceps*. Through their efforts the science of wrestling has been raised to something of its old dignity and importance, and public enthusiasm for its exhibitions of skill has been revived. Proof has not been wanting, in those countries where the revival has had most influence, that the wrestler can do as much for his country as the scholar and the soldier. Those who, like myself, are accepted as the foremost wrestlers of the time, have the satisfaction of knowing that their names are celebrated all over the world. Our presence at competitions is eagerly sought after. Instead of being shunned, people flatter themselves upon our acquaintance and are anxious to make it. There has been something like a return to the customs of antiquity in the treatment of wrestlers. Perhaps the day will come when we shall be loaded with honours!

The names of Hercules, Theseus, Milon, Croton, Chilon, Polydamas, Theogenes have come down to us from ancient times, but

III.—HALF NELSON AND BUTTOCK.

II.—PARRYING THE ATTACK.

IV.—THE CREEL HOLD.

V.—THE ARM LOCK.

the leading athletes of our own day are worthy to stand side by side with these heroes. Indeed, it is a question whether the anatomy of the modern wrestler is not superior to that of the ancient, as represented to us by the work of the sculptor of his day.

The twentieth century will be pre-eminently the century of sport, the century of physical force. People will be strong because they will have learnt scientifically how to become so. But in wrestling it should always be remembered that one does not become a wrestler because one is strong. One acquires strength through being a wrestler. It should be clearly understood that wrestling is a branch of gymnastics of the highest type, that it involves the possession of health and strength, and that it develops the art of becoming a useful member of society. The younger generation, however, who take it up, should guard against practising it solely with a view to spectacular effect.

Græco-Roman Wrestling.

In the brief abstract of the history of wrestling which I have just given, I have only touched on classic wrestling—that is to

VI.—BUTTOCK FROM THE HIP.

VII.—"THE FLYING MARE," A FEATURE OF THE DEVON, CORNWALL, AND LANCASHIRE STYLES.

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VIII.—NECK TWIST, HALF NELSON, AND HEAVE COMBINED.

IX.—PARRYING THE ARM LOCK, A POSITION SELDOM NECESSARY IN PRACTICE.

say, on wrestling in the Græco-Roman style. There are, of course, many other kinds, such as the Swiss, the "Catch-as-catch-can," and the Turkish wrestle. The principles of these are quite different from those of the Græco-Roman, where one has to throw one's adversary by skill—virtually strength used to the best advantage. In such wrestling the "Collar by force" and the "American arm" are admissible, but such strokes are ineffective unless you want to break one of your adversary's limbs! If anyone doubts the truth of this, let him submit his neck to me for the first, his arm for the second, and I fancy he will be less doubtful.

Græco-Roman wrestling is undoubtedly a science. All the moves are determined by certain rules, and as it argues a lack of skill to touch with the leg, accidents rarely occur. It could not be said of this wrestle as the Turks used to say of their variety: "At the wrestle, the men die—the women cry." Under Græco-Roman rules, each stroke is a matter of thrust and parry. It would take too long for me to give a detailed description of all these strokes here. I must content myself by indicating some of the most usual forms of thrust and parry in the accompanying poses which I have taken up with my friend Ferdinand Gruhn, amateur champion of wrestling in England.

X.—A NECK HOLD.

How to Become Strong.

Every day new systems of developing the body are brought to our notice. But developing the body does not necessarily make it strong. You may use a small 5lb. weight and brace your nerves and muscles, develop them too, perhaps, but the exercise will not give you strength. Whereas exercising with heavy weights, augmented from day to day, requires the putting forth of fresh effort, and develops not only the size of the muscles employed, but their strength, which, after all, is the essential thing. This is the *régime* that I have always followed:—

I eat and drink what tempts my appetite,

XI.—THE BRIDGE.

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and as much as my stomach can retain with comfort. I abstain from alcohol.

I take exercise daily, but without confining myself to any one branch of athletic training. Such exercise includes skipping, swimming, manipulating heavy weights, and wrestling.

The rest may be summed up in a sentence —as far as possible I avoid *excess* of every kind.

A Few Words about Myself.

My object in speaking about myself is that I hope my case may serve as example and encouragement to those of my readers who may feel disposed to take up wrestling. I am also perhaps actuated by a wish to dissipate the idea that there is any charlatanry in my success.

I am twenty-four. Weight, 96 kilos.

XII.—THE DOUBLE BRIDGE.

Height, 1 metre 32 centimetres. Biceps, 47 centimetres round. Forearm, 36 centimetres. Thigh, 68 centimetres. Calf, 42½ centimetres. Neck, 49 centimetres. When I was eighteen, I was at St. Peterburg pursuing my studies as an engineer, and going regularly to Professor Krajewski's gymnasium, where I assiduously practised exercises with weights and dumb-bells. Thanks to this training, I have been able to beat various records, and at the present time I hold twelve official world-records :—

1. Lifting with both arms : 116 kilos.
2. Lifting with one arm : 91 kilos.
3. Turning with one arm : 123 kilos.
4. Outstretched arm to left : 42 kilos ; outstretched arm to right : 44 kilos (simultaneously).
5. Arm stretched out in front : 55 kilos.
6. Arm held up perpendicularly : 105 kilos.
7. The same repeated twenty-one times in succession : 70 kilos.
8. The same repeated nine times : 80 kilos.
9. Turning with one arm four times in succession : 100 kilos.
10. With bent legs, raising and lifting above the head with both hands 141 kilos.
11. Lying on the back, supporting 150 kilos.
12. Lying on the back, turning 165 kilos.

Comparisons have often been instituted between Sandow and me—comparisons which are purely speculative. If Sandow consents to meet me, I shall be able to convince sceptics on the subject of his strength and of my own. Sandow advises training with expanders and light weights. I recommend the system of heavy weights, carefully graduated. Therefore Sandow and I belong to entirely different schools. My meeting with Sandow would prove which school is right—mine or his. Naturally, I am of opinion that my school would prove successful.

It was only after I had occupied myself with every branch of the art of lifting weights that, taking the advice of Count Ribeaupierre, president of the Société Athlétique at Petersburg, I practised wrestling. I was then twenty-one years of age. I had a meeting with Paul Pons, then champion of the world, and threw him in seven minutes. From that time I began to wrestle professionally, and gave up my work as an engineer.

I should never have been thrown by any wrestler if, two years ago, when I was still suffering from the effects of illness, I had not had the imprudence to try a throw with Laurent-le-Beaucairois. Before this meeting I had thrown him seven times. I have been proclaimed victor in all the bouts in which I have taken part, and have thrown all the wrestlers who have challenged me, among the more famous of whom I may quote : *Turkish :* Kara-Ahmed, Halil Adali, Cotch Mehmet. *French :* Laurent-le-Beaucairois, Paul Pons, Maurice Gambier, Lassartesse, De la Calmette. *Belgian :* Constant-le-Boucher, Clément-le-Terrassier, Omer de Bouillon. *German :* H. Eberlé, Jacobus Koch, Michael Hitzler, John Pohl. *Dutch :* Dick van den Berg. *American :* Piening. *Bulgarian :* Petroff. *Russian :* Michailow. *Danish :* Petersen.

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Qualities Acquired by Wrestling.

Energy, *intelligence*, and *confidence* are the qualities which my experience teaches me are the results of wrestling. It is, perhaps, needless to dilate on the value of energy in our moral outfit. The energetic man is not afraid of any enterprise; he does not shrink from any danger. He is insensible to fatigue, for the object in view is the only thing which occupies his mind, and to attain it he will rise superior to suffering and despise comfort. It is energy which distinguishes the hero from other men.

This energy can be acquired and developed by wrestling. Of ten men equally skilful and strong who engage in combat, which is the one who will be successful? I answer, the most energetic. When the muscles grow tired, there remain will and energy, which need never tire. When two men possessed of this remarkable energy engage, their nerves and wills grip as well as their bodies; and when at last one succumbs, one may say with truth that the body alone has been vanquished, and to both of these men who have put out the full measure of their energy one can apply Horace's words: "*Impavidum ferient ruinæ.*"

That wrestling also develops *intelligence* cannot be denied. Plato, the philosopher with the broad shoulders, was a wrestler. The sport, in which he frequently indulged, did not prevent him from being one of the most vigorous and illustrious thinkers in the world's history. Pythagoras, when he was only fifteen years of age, carried off the prize for wrestling at the Olympic games. This precocious excellence in athletics did not extinguish in him the sacred flame. All the world knows the reputation which he has left behind as a philosopher. It is a fact worth noting that wrestling, far from being an affair of brute force, brings into play a skill which at its best must proceed from the intelligence. In wrestling, worthy the name, the head commands, the muscles obey. It is intelligence which makes a wrestler capable of using the many and varied combinations in attack which make wrestling more than an art—a whole science of tactics in itself.

XIII.—THE NECK GRIP. (IN THIS, STEADY PRESSURE ONLY IS ALLOWED—A JERK IS FORBIDDEN.)

XIV.—RECOVERY OF THE ARMS, OR "AMERICAN ARM." (HERE, TOO, A JERK IS NOT ALLOWED—STEADY PRESSURE ALONE MUST BE EXERCISED.)

The same difficulties await you in the wrestling struggle as in what is popularly called "the struggle for life." In both a practical intelligence is the secret of success, and the development of this faculty means victory.

Lastly, wrestling, more than any other sport, gives a man confidence in himself. The wrestler is accustomed to looking his adversary in the face, to meeting him without the tremble of an eyelid. There stands a man who may be stronger than oneself. Who knows? Well, it's no good thinking about it. There are no comrades to help, as in some other sports. One has to rely on one's strength and skill, and take the full responsibility of the result. This develops confidence.

The Greeks gave the name "Gymnasium" to the public schools where their young citizens were educated. Wrestling was taught alongside of art and letters. Result—Pericles, Alcibiades, and Plato.

It would be a good thing, both for the intellect and for the physique of future generations, if gymnasiums in the true sense of the word could be revived to-day. And on their programme of instruction I would place "Wrestling" as first among the gymnastics of the world.

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AT THE GALLERY STAIRS.

By Bertha Newcombe.

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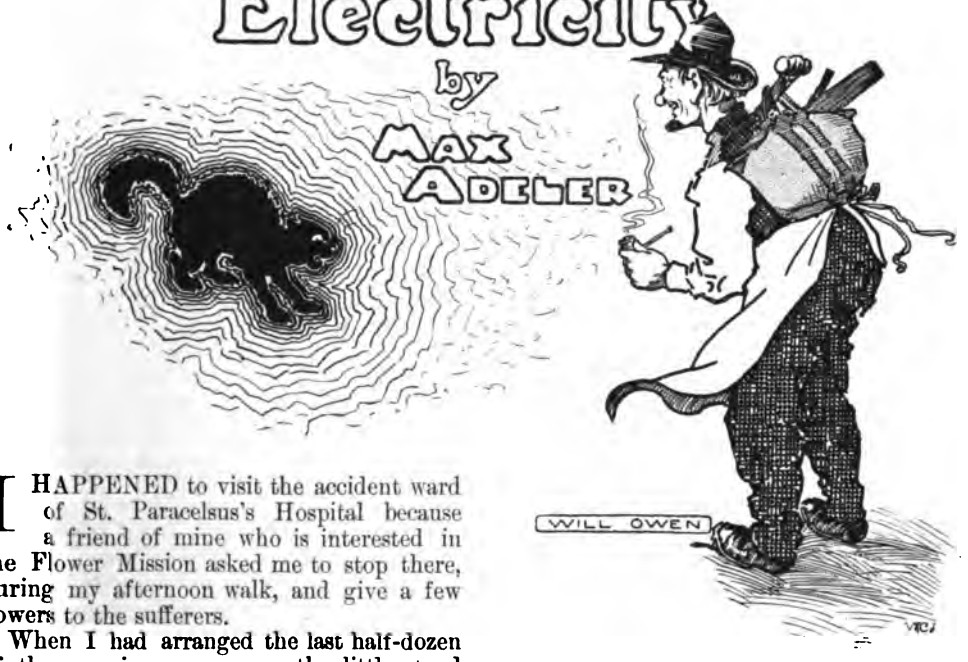
Frictional Electricity

by

MAX ADELER



I HAPPENED to visit the accident ward of St. Paracelsus's Hospital because a friend of mine who is interested in the Flower Mission asked me to stop there, during my afternoon walk, and give a few flowers to the sufferers.

When I had arranged the last half-dozen of the roses in a vase upon the little stand by the bedside of one bruised and battered patient, he looked at me gratefully and said—

"Oh! thank you, sir! Thank you so much. And would you mind, sir, stopping for a bit of talk? I'm so lonely and miserable."

I sat upon the chair by the bed, and with my hand smoothed the counterpane, while the patient asked me—

"Do I really look like a burglar, sir, do you think?"

I hesitated to reply, as I examined his face. It was covered with bandages, but his nose seemed swollen and there were bruises about both his eyes.

"I don't wonder you don't like to speak your mind, when you see me here a broken wreck, smashed all up and not looking a bit like myself, sir. But if you could see me well and strong, and all fixed up for going to church, you'd say right off that I don't favour no burglar in looks."

I asked the unfortunate man his name.

"Mordecai Barnes, sir; and I'm a journeyman plumber, sir, with a good character, and don't take no second place in that business with no man. How did I get here? What banged me all up into a shame and a disgrace like this? Well, I'll tell you, sir, if you have the patience to listen, for it does me good to talk who has been used so hard, and can get no attention from the nurses or nobody in this here asylum.

"Do you understand about frictional electricity, sir? No! I thought not; and well had it been for me, for this shattered hulk that you see lying here, if I had never heard of it neither! I'll tell you how it was, sir. My mate, George Watkins—and there ain't no better man nowhere, if you go clear round the globe—George Watkins is one of those men with inquiring minds, always a-hungering for knowledge, and so George off he goes week after week to the lectures up at the Huxley Institute. You know it—in that yallow building over by Nonpareil Square. And George often he tells me about the wonderful things he learned there, and, among others, he was fond of explaining to me about frictional electricity.

"It seems, sir, for you may not know it any more'n I knowed it until George explained it to me, that there's three different

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kinds of electricity. There's the kind you make with a steam engine, and the kind you make with acid, and the kind you make with friction. Well, sir, would you believe—or, let me say first, have you ever rubbed a black cat on the back in a dark room and seen the sparks fly? Of course—and, sir, I know it's almost beyond belief—but positive they told George Watkins, my mate, up at the Huxley Institute, that them sparks and the *Aurora Borealis*, that you see sometimes a-lighting up the heavens, is one and the same thing! Wonderful, isn't it, sir, that Science should discover that a black cat is some kind of kin to the *Aurora Borealis?* But George says that's what they said, for the *Aurora Borealis* is caused by the earth a-rolling around and rubbing the air, just as the sparks is caused by stroking the cat's back and making frictional electricity.

"And George, he says to me that this here frictional electricity is the only kind that's any use for curing pain. The steam engine kind won't do it, and the acid kind won't do it, but the frictional kind'll do it every time, if you only know how to apply it.

"Well, sir, now I pass to the sorrerful part of my story. There is a girl named Bella Dougherty that does housework for a man named Muffitt, and a mighty nice girl she is—or I used to think her nice. Maybe you know where Mr. Muffitt lives, on 149th Street, just above Parvin Street, the third house on the left with white shutters?

"Anyhow, I got to be fond of Bella, and often used to set and talk with her in the evenings in Mr. Muffitt's kitchen, and maybe have two or three other girls come in sometimes, with a few men; though I never cared, sir, for much flocking together at such times, for Bella Dougherty she was good enough company for me, just her and I by ourselves.

"Howsomedever, there was another man that had a kind of fancy for Bella Dougherty, although, in my opinion, he isn't fit to wipe her feet on, and his name is William Jones.

"This yer William Jones used to come intruding around there in Mr. Muffitt's kitchen when he wasn't wanted, and when he seen that me and Bella would rather be a-setting there by ourselves. And so, sir, one night, just to kill the time till he'd quit and go, I begun to tell them what George Watkins said to me about the Huxley Institute, and frictional electricity being a sure cure for pain.

"And William Jones, a-winking at Bella Dougherty, as much as to say, sir, that he'd be having the laugh on me, said he had a pain that minute in his head from neuralgia, and he'd bet me a quarter no frictional electricity would drive it out. I know now what was the matter with the head of William Jones. Not neuralgia, nor nothing of the sort, sir. It was vacuum. My mate, George Watkins, tells me that at the Institute they say that vacuum always produces pain; and that was the only thing the matter with this William Jones I'm a-telling you about.

"I never take no dare, not from no man of that kind, anyways, sir, so I bet him a quarter I'd cure him, and cure him with frictional electricity, too. So he set down on the chair a-laughing and a-winking at Bella Dougherty, who set over by the range, holding the quarters, and I begun to rub William Jones's eyebrows with my two thumbs; just gently, but right along, just like stroking a cat; keeping it up, a-rubbing and a-rubbing, until at last I asked him how he felt now; and can you imagine my supprise, sir, when I saw that William Jones was fast asleep? I was skeered at first, but in a minute I seen that I had hypnertised him unbeknown to myself, and there set William Jones 's if he was froze stiff.

"I wasn't so very sorry, sir, when I found out how things was a-going, although if I could 'a' seen what was the consequences of this strange occurrence, I'd 'a' seized my hat, and bid Bella Dougherty good-bye, and started straight for home.

"But, sir, of course I acted like a fool, for I'd read in the papers how a man who hypnertises another man can make him believe anything and do anything, and so I thought I'd have some fun with William Jones and enjoy a lovely, quiet evening with Bella Dougherty.

"So I said to William Jones: 'Now, William, you are a little school-scholar once again, and you've missed your lesson, and so you just go over there in that corner by the china-closet, and stand with your face to the wall and say over and over your multiplication table till you know it right.' And so, to the supprise of Bella Dougherty, William Jones went right over in the corner, like I told him, and there he stood saying: 'Six sixes is thirty-six, six sevens is forty-two,' and so on, whilst I set over with Bella Dougherty, peacefully enjoying ourselves just exactly's if William Jones wasn't anywheres about.

"And so, sir, it went on until Mrs. Muffitt she come down and said to Bella Dougherty it was time to shut the house up, and then I bid her good-night and told

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William to go home and go straight to bed; which he did, and a-saying the multiplication table all the way down the street. He would have said it all night, sir, I do believe, if I hadn't ordered him to stop and to begin saying his prayers when I passed him in at his front door.

"You may believe me, sir, that I had William Jones on my mind all night, and was a-worrying a little about him, too, for fear maybe he'd never come to. So around I goes the first thing in the morning to his boarding-house, and his landlady tells me he had been a-saying his prayers all mixed up like with the multiplication table ever since he come home the night before. She was a bit troubled about it, sir, as you may imagine, for William Jones was a good boarder, and it'd 'a' been money out of her pocket if he had lost his mind.

"So, then, I seen William Jones and knowed at wunst that the hypnertising still had hold of him. Very well; I had no idea how to get him out of it, and it didn't hurt him nohow, so I just commanded William Jones to drop the multiplication table and his prayers, and to fix all his intellect in the regular way on plumbing; and William Jones at wunst calmed down and seemed his old self again.

"Then a wicked thought flashed into my mind. You know how it is yourself, sir—you are tempted, and you are weak, and you fall, and then the first thing you know, to be sure your sin'll find you out, and there you are; here *I* am, a shattered hulk. It suddenly occurred to me, sir, that if I could control William Jones, why not turn his affections away from Bella Dougherty, who might take a fancy to him—who knows, women are so queer?—and direct his thoughts towards my own Aunt Maggie, who is a middle-aged widder and not so bad looking, and far too good for such a man as William Jones—although, to speak the plain truth, I had no objections to having him for an uncle by marriage?

"Therefore I did so, sir, and before the week was out I heard that William Jones was plumbing in the most supprising manner,

"'I was skeered at first.'"

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plumbing here and plumbing there, and paying attentions vigorously, so to speak, to Aunt Maggie every evening.

"In the meantime, sir, believe me, I did not lose time in my suit with Bella Dougherty, who seemed real mad at William Jones when people began to talk about his courting Aunt Maggie; so that in less than two weeks, when Bella Dougherty heard that William Jones and Aunt Maggie had agreed to marry, I got Bella Dougherty about as good as to say, although she never quite said it square, that she would have me.

"I never knowed how it happened, sir—whether somebody waked William Jones up, or he just come to by himself; but, sir, anyhow, William Jones about that time dropped hypnertism and was himself again. Imagine, sir, how things stood! There never was a man as mad as William Jones—mad with me, and mad with Aunt Maggie, to whom he sent a cruel message that he wa'n't marrying no grandmas, and that made Aunt Maggie mad; and then William Jones set down and wrote me a letter to the general effect that whenever he met me my course in this life would be short.

"Naturally, sir, as you may believe, I kept out of William Jones's way, for I am a quiet man, not fond of quarrelling, and besides, William Jones is forty pounds heavier, sir, than I am.

"But one night, while I was setting in the kitchen at Mr. Muffitt's, having some uplifting conversation with Bella Dougherty, there was a sudden knock on the side door, and up she jumps, pale and skeered, and says: 'I do believe that is William Jones. He said he might maybe call this evening.' So, of course, as I never hunt trouble, I raised the window-sash over by the kitchen-table at the back and went out, just as William Jones come in the side door. He kept the door open a-watching for me, and so, as I couldn't get to the gate in the yard, I climbed quickly over the high fence into the next yard.

"I ought to have gone right home, sir, without stopping, but I hated to leave William Jones there with Bella Dougherty, and me just driven out; so, as it was raining hard and I had on my Sunday suit, what does I do but try the latch on the kitchen door of the house next to Mr. Muffitt's, and, finding the door opened, in I walked and set down in a chair to await what was going to happen. That was a bad job for me, sir! It isn't safe to take one false step.

"'He was a Quaker, sir—a big man.'"

"For the next minute the inside door from the dining-room springs open, and a man jumps out and grabs me and says: 'I've got thee at last, have I?' He was a Quaker, sir—a big man and with a grip like iron. I never knew a man with a grip like that. Did you ever, sir, have your fingers in the crack of a door and somebody a-leaning hard on the door? That was the way this Quaker held me. Then he calls out 'Amelia! Amelia!' and in a minute a sweet old Quaker lady comes out with a candle, and he says to her: 'I've caught that burglar, Amelia; thee get the clothes-line.'

"So the lady she gets the clothes-line, and that man he tied my hands and my arms behind my back, good and tight, and then he makes me

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set down, and he ties me to the chair, and at last he gives the rope two or three turns around the leg of the kitchen table, and says to me: 'Friend, thee can just set there while I go to get an officer!' Gave me no chance to explain. Took it all for granted; whereas, if he would have listened to me, I could have cleared up the whole mystery in two minutes.

"So then, sir, out he goes for a policeman; and the old lady sets down in a chair not far from me, and said she was sorry I was so wicked, and asked me about my mother, and if I ever went to First-Day school, and a whole lot of things. Then a thought seemed to strike her, and she went into the next room and came back with a book in her hand, and she said she would read a good book to me while we waited for justice to take its course.

"She was lovely to look at, sir, with her tidy brown frock and the crape handkerchief folded acrost her bosom, and her cap and the smile on her face; a sweet face, sir; an angel-face; yes, sir, but sweet faces often has cruel dispositions behind them. For then she told me that the book was called 'Barclay's Apology for the People called Quakers,' or something like that, and she begun to read it to me.

"Have you ever read that book, sir? It is dedicated, I think, to Charles the Second, and it begins with fifteen Propositions, and she read every one of them Propositions from first to last. Then she turned to the section, sir, about Salutations and Recreations, and she read and read and read until, sir, actually it made my head swim.

"Do you know, sir, is Barclay still alive—the man who wrote that book? Is there no way of ever getting even with him?

"I couldn't get away. I might have walked out somehow with the chair fastened to me, but I couldn't go, could I, sir, with the table tied to my leg, and particularly if I had to climb the fence? So I had to set there and be regarded as a burglar.

"But at last I *would* be heard, and I told her I was no burglar, but an innercent man; and then she looked in the index to find if Barclay had anything interesting to say about the wickedness of telling falsehoods. And then I said I was a member of the Baptist Society, and she said at once she would read Barclay on the errors of that sect; but I insisted on being heard, and I explained to her that I got into this trouble by trying to cure William Jones by frictional electricity, and she said: 'Thee has an ingenious and fruitful mind to invent such a story. Oh! that it had been turned to better devices than following a life of evil!'

"'And it seems hard, too,' I said, 'that a perfectly respectable Baptist plumber should

"Aunt Maggie."

be arrested as a burglar, simply because he tried to relieve the pain of William Jones by a scientific method invented by the Huxley Institute.'

"'Where is thy friend William Jones?' she asked.

"Do you know, sir, at that very moment you could hear through the partition William Jones and Bella Dougherty laughing next door! It seemed like mockery to me, a-setting there in chains, so to speak.

"'He is next door, ma'am,' I said, 'a-courting the hired girl.'

"'I will prove if thee is telling the truth,' she said, and she got up and moved towards the door.

"'No, ma'am, no!' I said; 'please don't do that. William mustn't know that I am here'; and so she come back and set down again, and picked up Barclay, and looked sorrerful at me, and said—

"'It is wicked for thee to have such vain imaginations. Why does thee persist in pretending that there is a William Jones?' and then she started to look through Barclay, to find if he had anything that would fit the William Jones part of the case.

"What could I do? I daresn't call in

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William Jones to prove my innercence; he was mad all over at me, and a bigger man too, and here I was tied; and I couldn't call Bella Dougherty without William Jones knowing it. It was hard, sir, for a man as innercent as a little babe to set there with that sweet and smooth old lady considering him a shameless story-teller and firing Barclay at him, now wasn't it, sir? Would you have called William Jones, sir, under them there circumstances, and his laughter and Bella Dougherty's still a-resounding through the partition?

"Well, sir, that policeman was a long time a-coming with the old Quaker. I never knowed why; but Friend Amelia she set down again and turned over the leaves of Barclay and begun wunst more to read about Salutations and Recreations, while, strange as it may seem to you, sir, I felt that I'd rather see the policeman and be locked up in a dungeon than hear more of it.

"But, howsomedever, after a while, in comes the Quaker, and the officer with him, and the very first minute the officer seen me he says: 'I reckernize him as an old offender.' 'No, you don't,' says I, 'I'm no old offender. I'm a perfectly honest Baptist plumber, and I kin prove it, too.' 'How kin you prove it?' says the officer. 'By William Jones,' says I, 'who is a-setting in that kitchen right next door, a-wooing the hired girl.'

"I was bold about it, sir, because I knowed William Jones daresn't strike at me while the officer was there.

"'We'll see about that,' says the officer, and in he goes to Mr. Muffitt's yard next door, and comes back with William Jones. I have no use for a man like William Jones. What do you think he does, sir? Why, he looks me over from head to foot in a blank sort of a way, and then, turning to the policeman, he says: 'I don't know the man, officer; never seen him before'; then that low-down plumber walks out and leaves me there and goes back, and in a minute I hear him and Bella Dougherty a-laughing worse than ever.

"'I thought not,' says the officer, slipping the handcuffs on me; 'and so now you come right along'; and Friend Amelia looked mournful at me, and says to me she would come around regular and read Barclay to me in my cell after I was convicted.

"And so, sir, to make a long story short, I was took up before the magistrate and held for burglary, and my mate, George Watkins, that owns his own house, went my bail, and so I was let go.

"I might stop here, sir; but I must tell you that the follering Thursday I met William Jones up a kind of a blind alley where I was working, while he was working in a house on the opposite side. He had me in a corner where there was no chance to run, so I put on a bold face and went right up to him, and says I: 'William, there's been some differences betwixt us, but I'm not the man to bear grudges, and I forgive you!' 'What's that?' says he, savage. 'Why,' says I, 'the whole thing is just one of them unpleasant misunderstandings,' and then I started to explain to him about the Huxley Institute theory of frictional electricity and the *Aurora Borealis*. I can't tell you what he said, sir, in reply with reference to the *Aurora Borealis*, because I'm a decent man and never use no low language; but suddenly he jumped on me, and the first thing I knowed I was being lifted in the ambulance and fetched to this yer hospital. Was it right, sir, do you think, for William Jones to strike me foul like that while I was trying to state my case to him? No, sir. But that's not the worst of it. Last Tuesday word came to me that Bella Dougherty had throwed me over and is going to marry William Jones on Decoration Day! Think of that, sir!" and Mordecai Barnes turned his head upon his pillow and moaned. Turning again towards me, he was about to resume his statement, when suddenly he exclaimed—

"Why, there's Aunt Maggie!"

A woman of fifty years, nicely clad, came to the bedside and said to him coldly—

"Is that you, Mordecai Barnes?"

"Yes, Aunt Maggie."

"I'm ashamed of you, Mordecai Barnes," said she, "ashamed of you. It served you right. You got just what was comin' to you. I wish William had banged you worse."

Mordecai Barnes groaned.

"And, more than that," continued Aunt Maggie, glaring at him through her spectacles, "I've torn up my old will which named you my sole heir, and made a new one, and left all my property to this yer very hospital."

With these words Aunt Maggie walked away and left the room.

Mordecai Barnes could not speak for a few minutes. He looked as if death would be welcome. Then, pulling the bed-clothes up under his chin and closing his eyes wearily, he said—

"Curse the day, say I, when George Watkins first went to the Huxley Institute and heard about frictional electricity!"

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THE PRETENDERS.

By B. A. CLARKE.

BEFORE the Tyrells moved to the North-West of London, they resided in Merthyr Road, in one of the odd numbers—an important qualification, for the difference at that time between the even numbers and the odd was all the difference between town and country, and not ordinary country at that. Starting from the gardens, and stretching away back to the North-Eastern main line, was a tract of waste land, traversed by important ditches, broken by patches of impenetrable undergrowth, and glorified by a mountain range. This was about a hundred yards from the houses, and ran parallel to them for some distance, after which it curved sharply towards the railway and then sank down abruptly to the plain. Juvenile geologists attributed this striking feature of the scenery to volcanoes, whilst adult speculation radiated from the word "railways." Back in the hoary past, said the elders, before Merthyr Road was thought of, an embankment was begun that was to have connected the North-Eastern system with a railway that had never come into existence. But no two persons agreed about any of the details, and the history (if history it were) had become as overgrown with legend as the (alleged) embankment had with coarse grass, Scotch thistles, and flowering weeds. But whether the formation were volcanic, or of the primary railroad period, does not affect this story one atom. The range was there, and it was pierced by mountain passes (if you are hopelessly adult and unintelligent, you can say that these were spots where earth had been removed for railway purposes), and one could journey through them to the open country beyond. And gloomy defiles they were, overhung by terrifying earth cliffs. On the whole, the children from the houses respected this natural frontier; but the boys who lived in the railway cottages that had been built in the delta between the main line and the shunting-grounds would at times sweep through the passes in fierce predatory bands. Then the Tyrells and their friends retired into their gardens, and even adults feared to come singly forth. Terrible tales were whispered of the ferocity of these boys. One was that they ate thistle-heads whole. The Tyrells would cut thistle-heads open and eat what they called the nut (and very delicious the flavour was, when they could persuade themselves that they tasted anything), but the tale ran that these savages crammed the whole prickly head (some said the whole thistle) into their mouths and throve upon it. What could boys handicapped by soft living and a governess do against such foes? Living thus upon the conquered country, the invaders could maintain a raid a whole day; and when the householders returned from the City, the marauding bands might be seen winding back through the mountains laden with garden spoil. One says "might be seen" advisedly, for as a matter of fact no one but old Jeeks, the jobbing gardener, ever did see them with any plunder; but then it was just in the gardens where he happened to be working that the robberies mostly occurred. The Merthyr Road youngsters called the railway boys cads, and affected to despise them, but in their hearts they knew whose was the nobler life. Black Michael, the leader, they held in acknowledged reverence. This was a hobbledehoy of fifteen who carried upon him a rich coal deposit and a revolver, and was believed to have upon his hands the unerasable stain of human blood. His legal name was Alfred Good.

Claude, who was learned in "Tales of a Grandfather," used to talk much about this outlaw, particularly, when chance offered, to Jeeks, who had reasons of his own for encouraging the legend.

"If we had any cattle or horses," said Claude, "he would carry them off every one."

"Aye. I shouldn't wonder at all. He's a holy terror, that boy!"

It happened one day, early in the midsummer holidays (old Jeeks being employed in the Tyrells' garden at the time), that the railway boys, who had been quiescent for some weeks, swept down in unprecedented numbers.

> A multitude like which the populous North
> Poured never from her frozen loins to pass
> Rhine or the Danwar.

They devastated the fields, and their progress was stopped only by the high black garden fences. Dirty faces appeared at

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intervals above these, and challenges were hurled in terms that extorted admiration while they chilled the blood. Black Michael himself was present, threatening to take the life of every man, woman, and child upon the entire estate. In the evening they withdrew; but it seemed they must have returned under cover of night, for at breakfast next morning the servant brought in the news that all Mr. Tyrell's fowls—six prize Bantams—had been stolen.

"This shall be put a stop to," said Mr. Tyrell; "the neighbours ought to have combined against the annoyance long ago."

"Boardman's father is a Volunteer; he could come with his rifle," said Claude. "There are two air-guns at 113, and Steggal's uncle has a Chinese sword. The rest of us could tie knives on to poles."

"By the neighbours combining," said Mr. Tyrell patiently, "I meant that they should have sent a joint letter of protest to the railway company, insisting upon their keeping order on their own property. We don't fight nowadays with deadly weapons, Claude. Besides, what use would a child like you be if we did?"

"I might kill one of the littler ones," said Claude mildly.

"You are a little donkey," said his father.

Mr. Tyrell made a point of discussing subjects rationally with his children; but often the first exchanges showed that they were looking at the question from a point of view steeply inaccessible to adults; and this despite the fact that he prided himself on possessing an absolute recollection of his own childhood. As a natural consequence he lost his temper.

"'Aye. I shouldn't wonder at all. He's a holy terror, that boy!'"

"On my way to town I shall report this at the police-station," he said, addressing the remark to his eldest son exclusively.

"If the police are coming," said Max, "I will get to work on the case at once, before they trample over the ground and destroy all the clues."

"You are as silly as your brother."

Immediately after breakfast Max hurried to the scene of the crime, and began to rush to and fro like one demented, picking up tiny objects, measuring footmarks, every nerve obviously being at breaking tension. The detective *rôle* was quite a new one for him. He was filling it well, and it seemed strange and sad that Walter and Claude should be so completely indifferent to his intellectual methods. He tried to stimulate their curiosity.

"I can tell you one thing—Black Michael had no finger in this. Black Michael makes

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brown paper cigars of his own manufacture. The criminal was smoking shag in a clay pipe."

He held up to view a shred of tobacco and a clay pipe stem.

"Jolly good," said Walter. The way he said it was equivalent to telling his elder brother to run away and play.

"Do you know what I am going to do?" he asked, when Max had returned in a huff to his investigations. "I am going to call out my army, and you shall go with us."

"I don't want to; your army is all play. Black Michael does real things."

"But this is real. We are going to follow their trail, find out where they put the fowls, and then steal them back."

"We may have to follow miles and miles and miles. When we get there, perhaps we shall have to be out on the ground waiting until the dead of night."

"That's about the size of it. You will come?"

"I will come if you promise not to have any toy things."

Walter flushed. The babyishness of his army was a sore point with him. It was past eleven before the forces were assembled, and there were long faces when the nature of the expedition was realised. But Walter plunged at once into preparations, and fear could not live long in that cheerful bustle. The army was arranged in three divisions, and so manœuvred that the three defiles were entered simultaneously. Walter himself marched with the centre, carrying one of the air-guns from No. 113. If one of the divisions were opposed, it was to hold the enemy until the others could sweep round and take the foe in the rear. Once safely through the passes, close formation was abandoned (as likely to attract notice), and the boys streamed across the fields in twos and threes until they reached the railway lines. They crossed these, and Walter ordered them to lie down in the shelter of a dry ditch. Beyond this was a low black fence, and then came the railway cottages, huddled under the shelter of the plateau that formed the shunting-grounds. Up to this moment Walter had not decided whether the expedition were play or deadly earnest. For one thing, he did not know where Black Michael lived, and although at stages in the advance he had professed to see signs that a large force driving fowls and other animals in front of them had passed along that way the day before, this was merely make-believe, and Claude had protested against its introduction. And now, as if for the express purpose of putting an end to this indecision; their great antagonist himself came strolling over the brow of the embankment. All unconsciously he passed close to the hiding-place, entered the back yard of one of the railway cottages, and bolted the gate behind him. Walter crept forth to reconnoitre. To his delight he found that the fence formed the fourth side of a fowl-house. He could hear birds—the stolen Bantams, no doubt—inside. A prearranged signal brought his followers around him. The fence was high; keeping close to it, they could not be seen from the cottages.

"Well, and what can we do now we are here?"

All but the boldest were beginning to wish that they had not come.

"Our Bantams are in there. You see that square hole for letting the fowls into the fields? Claude will crawl through that and drive them out to us. We shall grab them as they come through."

He selected Claude for this duty because, although not the smallest present, he had a known and snake-like aptitude for crawling through impossible apertures. Besides, he had confidence in the youngster's nerve.

Claude, looking a little anxious, divested himself of coat, collar, and waistcoat. His brother loaded the air-gun, and rested the muzzle through a crack in the fence.

"This is real enough for you, Claudie?" he whispered.

His younger brother, who had already thrown himself upon the ground, looked up with a faint, brave little smile. Walter experienced an unaccustomed movement of remorseful pity. Claude was little more than a valiant babe. Why had he been exposed to such an ordeal? At the thought his hand stiffened upon the stock of the air-gun. Be wary, now, O Black Michael! Rush out and attempt to take Claude Tyrell at disadvantage, and it shall go hard with you, for all your revolver. Quickly, indeed, must you draw it to anticipate this stern marksman at the fence. Had he emerged from the cottage, Walter would certainly have fired, and he would, in his present mood, had his weapon been a rifle. Few people, however, would care to charge straight up to an air-gun.

Claude, meanwhile, was passing through that dreadful period that comes in such adventures, when, having got a certain distance, it seems that the remainder of one's days must be spent just there; for never

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will it be possible to move an inch forward or back. The terror passed, and he was amongst the fowls. To his relief there was but one apartment, and that quite dark. Evidently the fowls were meant to take their exercise in the fields. It was quite an easy task driving them out to his brother, but the riot that ensued, the cluckings and squawkings and flutterings of wings, made him anxious to be gone. But it would never do to yield to panic. This squirming through small holes needs all one's nerve. He came through more quickly this time, Walter giving him a helpful, if somewhat scraping pull.

"Good man! We have collared four fowls; the others must go. Don't wait to put on your things."

Nothing was attempted in the nature of an orderly retreat. Until the defiles were gained every boy ran his hardest, except Walter, who loyally covered the rear.

But the *morale* of the force was unshaken. The four boys that had captured fowls were heroes, but Claude's glory eclipsed all.

"And before he came away," said Walter, "he fastened the cottage door and set fire to the whole place. By this time Black Michael and his mother are burned to ashes."

"I never," said Claude indignantly. It was sickening. Something *real* had been accomplished, something that made this morning's work stand out from any other's, and here was Walter introducing this inferior element of make-belief quite gratuitously.

But so far Claude had not seen the recaptures.

"Let's have a look at them. I hope Beauty is one."

"There has been a mistake," said Walter awkwardly. "They are not our fowls at all. I don't know if you think it matters."

Claude was disappointed that his favourites had not been recovered, but otherwise was undisturbed.

"It's tit for tat."

"But don't you see? Very likely Black Michael didn't steal our fowls."

"Then it was a raid," said Claude, "and we had a right to take everything."

"Your father came back after visiting the police-station," said Mrs. Tyrell at dinner. "A detective is coming round this afternoon."

Here was a coil indeed! It would be easy enough to say the birds had come back; but ten to one the police had been informed that they were Bantams, and anything less like Bantams than the present ungainly occupants of the fowl-house could not be imagined.

"Let's bring old Max into it," said Walter after dinner. "He does not give much for the police."

They found their eldest brother improvising upon the pianoforte. He did not learn the instrument, and until to-day had scarcely touched it. The effect was not actually musical, but it seemed to be assisting thought.

"I say, Max, old man, you might listen. We're in a scrape with the police."

At the word "police," Max, who had seemed all unconscious of their presence, turned round sharply.

"What's the row?"

They informed him.

"I told you for certain that it wasn't Black Michael."

"I know; but we thought you were just pretending."

"Did you, though? I don't know how to help you. But I'll think what can be done."

He faced the keys again and thumped away vigorously.

"I can always think out a difficult problem better with the aid of a musical instrument."

Claude and Walter watched him admiringly, but with pardonable impatience.

"I think there is a way," he said, "if the police give us a couple of hours."

"Oh! do please hurry!" said Claude.

At that moment there came a heavy thump upon the front door.

Mrs. Tyrell bustled into the drawing-room.

"Max, the detective has come, and you must see him."

"Mind you kids keep your mouths shut," Max found opportunity to whisper. Then he went into the hall and received the great man with an easy nod. Now, and throughout the interview, his face was as a mask, stonily impenetrable. Max Tyrell was famed for this power at school.

The younger boys, despite their anxiety, followed out to see the human bloodhound. They saw a huge man, well over six feet high, very red and stout, and his neck measurement was nearly half that of his waist. He was that rarest of phenomena in the police force—a man so vast that his feet did not seem out of proportion.

Max led the way into the garden.

"I understand that you suspect the boys from the railway cottages," said the official, reading very deliberately from a leather

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"'Hold hard a minute!' he said to Max, who was for relocking the door."

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pocket-book, "and particularly one known by the name of Black Michael?"

"Ridiculous!"

"That is what the gentleman said, anyway."

"Look at the fence," said Max. "Look at the gravel paths and the flower-beds."

The detective turned a sagacious eye upon each in turn.

"Blest if I can see anything."

"Do you still think that the theft could have been the work of boys?"

"Look here," said Mr. Pierce, the detective, gruffly, "if you know any facts, you are bound to reveal them—that is law. But if not, I will trouble you to let me conduct this inquiry in my own way."

"Examining the field just outside our garden this morning," said Max, "I found these."

He produced a clay pipe-stem, a broken boot-lace, and a hob-nail.

"You had better keep them," said Mr. Pierce. "If you give them to me, I shall throw them over the wall."

"These clues tell me," said Max, "that the crime was committed by a man from Yorkshire between sixty and seventy years of age."

"Well, take my advice and don't believe them. Now, if you'll kindly give me the key of the fowl-house, I need not trouble you further."

This was what Max wanted to prevent. But Mr. Pierce got his way, and the door being opened revealed four large Cochin Chinas at roost.

"They have evidently managed to make their escape," said Max, "and have returned to us."

For the moment Mr. Pierce did not notice that anything was amiss. Unfortunately, he took out his pocket-book to make some fresh notes, and his eye caught something that had been written there previously.

"Hold hard a minute!" he said to Max, who was for relocking the door. "The information given was that the only fowls you owned were Bantams."

"Prize Bantams," said Max correctingly.

"These are far too large for Bantams."

"They were considered fine birds at the show. They took the prize for size."

"No one ever saw Bantams like that."

"That is just what makes them so valuable."

"My next-door neighbour keeps Bantams, and I tell you they are not a quarter the size of these birds—not a quarter."

"I expect," said Max, "he does not feed them properly. You know, Bantams won't thrive on everything. Potato peelings, now, is one of the worst things. You can see them shrink on that diet."

Walter and Claude, who were all of a tremble throughout the interview, could not resist a snigger.

Mr. Pierce flew into a passion.

"I am being made a fool of, I can see that very clearly. There's some nonsense at the back of this—perhaps worse. I shall come again this evening, when the gentleman is at home, and perhaps you will wish you had kept a civil tongue in your head."

"That is all right," said Max reassuringly, when the great man had gone. "Now we must have a word with the thief. I have ordered him to be here at half-past four, and I don't think he will be late."

"Who is it, Max? Oh! do tell us!"

"Old Jeeks, of course. He gave himself away talking that rubbish about Black Michael and the feud. No one but a silly kid like young Claude could be stuffed with rot like that. He has been stealing things from the gardens all the time, waiting for days when the railway boys were around, so as to lay it on to them."

"Here the old beast comes," said Claude.

Mr. Jeeks pushed open the garden door and stood touching his forehead and grinning nervously. His face was twitching; but then it always did when he smoked.

"Good afternoon, Master Tyrell."

"Well, have you brought back our fowls?"

"They are in a hamper outside."

"Lucky for you. Slip them back through the run, and mind no one sees."

The old man obeyed.

"And you can put the other fowls into your hamper and smuggle *them* back where they came from."

Walter explained where that was.

"How can I do that without being found out?"

"That's your business. You will get locked up sure enough if you don't do what I say."

"All right, Master Tyrell. I didn't mean for to anger you. I have your word if I do this you won't give me away?"

"Well, clear as quickly as you like, and don't ever come back."

"Do you see his boot?" whispered Claude, "it is tied up with string."

"And he is smoking a new clay pipe," said Walter. "I wonder if there is a hob-nail missing from his boot?"

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Mr. Jeeks, who had been shuffling about in the fowl-house, now appeared with the hamper upon his shoulder and started across the fields.

"I am sorry for Detective Pierce," said Max. "If he had accepted the clues I offered him, the case would have brought him some credit."

The object of the boy's compassion re-

"Mr. Jeeks pushed open the garden door and stood touching his forehead and grinning nervously."

turned in the evening, accompanied by a short and very bow-legged man, in shiny broadcloth and a blue bowler. This newcomer bore himself very strangely, his manner towards Mr. Tyrell being alternately familiar and threatening.

"My fowls have come back, I am glad to say," said Mr. Tyrell.

"Your Bantams," said the stranger, closing one eye and shaking his head reprovingly.

"Who is this fellow?" said Mr. Tyrell; "is he a member of the Force?"

"He isn't. His name is Pat Rogers, and he is the greatest living authority upon the bull terrier."

"Well! there are no bull terriers here."

"A man like that will know a bit about other things. I have asked him for an opinion upon your Bantams."

"This is not a poultry show, my good man."

"I am trying to carry this through pleasantly," said the detective, "but it won't do to exasperate me. Something queer has been going on, and I am here to find out what."

"You saw Mr. Pierce this afternoon, Max. Have you any notion what he means?"

"He says that our fowls are not Bantams."

"Rubbish!"

"Ah! but it is not rubbish. You said at the station that you owned only Bantams. Now, I ask what are those other fowls? and how do you account for their being on your premises? Other birds are missing besides yours."

"Do you think I steal fowls, or is it one of my sons?"

"I don't accuse anyone. I should have thought the birds strayed in accidentally, if your son hadn't been so mighty clever trying to bounce me."

"He said his neighbour's Bantams weren't a quarter the size of ours, and I said they couldn't be getting the right kind of food."

"You hear that, Pat; the young gentleman will give you lessons in raising livestock. He wanted to teach me my business this afternoon."

"If you want the truth," said Mr. Rogers, who had been handling the ornaments on the chimney-piece, "they are not Bantams at all. They're Cochins; that's what they are, and bad bred ones at that. I don't say 'ow

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they came 'ere, not being my business, but Cochins is what they *are*."

"You shall come straight down into the garden and look at them."

"No need to look. I noo directly George told me what 'e'd seen."

"You will please come now, both of you. And mind, to-morrow I shall report the whole matter to headquarters."

"Perhaps I shall do some reporting," said Mr. Pierce menacingly.

"Now," said Mr. Tyrell, when he had thrown open the tarred door, "walk in and examine the birds."

"Just take a look round, Pat," said the detective carelessly.

When the expert emerged, he stood with his head thrown back and gazing fixedly at the sky. His mouth was wide open.

"Well?" said Mr. Tyrell impatiently.

Mr. Rogers transferred his gaze to the gravel. He slowly scratched his head.

"I don't want to stand here all day."

"Before I say anything I must 'ave a word with Mr. Pierce."

A whispered consultation followed, the detective's face lengthening as it proceeded.

Mr. Rogers acted as spokesman. Evidently he had been directed to put the best face on the blunder possible.

"They are very tidy birds, sir, and I wouldn't mind buying a setting."

"Tidy birds! But what *are* they? You said they were Cochins."

"Orstralian Cochins. The young gentleman will bear me out I said Orstralian Cochins."

"Well, never mind that. What are these?"

"Well, sir, some folk 'ud call 'em Bantams, and some 'ud call 'em Orstralian Cochins."

"Australian fiddlesticks!"

"There I am with you, sir. Orstralian Cochins strictly ain't Cochins at all; but that's the name they go by in the trade. And wonderfully like Bantams they are, too—them Orstralian birds. Run, perhaps, just a shade bigger. I can forgive a policeman for not being clear which is which."

"They are the biggest Bantams that ever I saw," said the detective sulkily.

"That's where you went off the line, old friend," said the expert. "You 'eard they was prize birds, and you expected too much. You noo Bantams was a small breed, and you thought a prize Bantam would go under a thimble. That's the public all over. Not that old friend Pierce was altogether wrong, mark you. I 'ave seen smaller birds."

"There is no more to be said," growled Mr. Pierce. "I was wrong, and I apologise. If, after that, the gentleman wants to rob a family man of his job, he is not what I take him for."

"All right, officer," said Mr. Tyrell; "we will let the matter drop. And if you and your friend would like a glass of beer before you go, you are more than welcome."

Claude and Walter for the next hour or so followed their brother about with the devotion of two faithful dogs. That worthy soon tired of it.

"You are every bit as clever as Sherlock Holmes," said Walter for the twentieth time. "What was the first thing—the very first thing of all—that made you think Old Jeeks was the thief?"

Max pretended to yawn.

"The very first thing—let me see. Oh! I saw him do it!"

"What?"

"I was just going to raise an alarm, when I thought what a ripping time I could have playing Sherlock Holmes! One thing I did was to go round to Martin and try to borrow his violin; I meant to sit scraping all the morning, and then say I had thought out who stole them, and it must be old Jeeks. That pig Martin wouldn't lend the violin, so I had to make do with the piano. Not half so good as a violin."

"Was it all pretending?"

"Every bit."

"But the boot-lace and the pipe-stem you found really did belong to Jeeks."

"Of course they did. I saw him throw them away when he was at work yesterday afternoon. And those were really his foot-marks. But he was in and out between our garden and the field all the time he was at work, so there was no evidence if I hadn't seen him. It's been ripping, pretending it all."

"Quite as good as real," said Walter lightly.

"I hate pretending," said Claude.

"What about that rot you were talking at breakfast about raids? What did the railway boys ever do, except loaf about and cheek the servants?"

"Well, I thought it was all real."

"You have had enough 'real' to-day to satisfy you. You were really in a scrape about those fowls; and it was a real detective we bamboozled."

"That part was screaming," said Walter. He laughed at the recollection until tears streamed down his face.

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"Well, I wanted it to be all real," Claude grumbled.

"It don't make a scrap of difference," said Walter.

But Claude was looking out of window, and could see the difference the revelation made. It removed from the landscape a noble mountain range and two swift rivers, replacing them by half-dry ditches and a paltry mound of earth. It exterminated an ancient and warlike tribe, which had shown some of the faults of savages but their nobler traits also, and there was no one in their haunts but some foul-mouthed little boys.

"If it comes to that," said Max, "I don't suppose that anything ever is all real—anything interesting. The best part is sure to be pretending."

With this dreary thought revolving in his brain, Claude said "Good-night" and went dejectedly up to bed.

THE SPIRIT OF WINTER.
From a painting by Beatrice Offor.

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THE OWL.

DESCRIBED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY
R. B. LODGE.

THE owl, partly perhaps owing to its nocturnal habits and uncanny cries, and partly no doubt to its partiality for churches and churchyards, has always been a victim of ignorance and superstition, and has suffered persecution in all times and in all countries for misdeeds of which it is entirely innocent. If we were only half as clever as we try to make ourselves out to be, the owl would be the most honoured of birds, and anyone rash enough to molest it would be punished as befits one who harms a public benefactor.

THE BARN OWL.

Now, it is very easy to make statements like this about birds, but it is not always so easy to prove the truth of them as it is in the case in question. For owls, like all birds of prey, cast up in pellets or "castings" all the indigestible parts of their food, such as bones, fur, and feathers; and these pellets, unlike those of hawks and eagles, which are left scattered about over a wide expanse of country and consequently escape observation, are deposited in the hollow trees which serve most of them as resting-places during the day, and also as nesting-places during the summer months.

A suitable tree is sometimes tenanted by owls for years; and if they are undisturbed, the accumulation of these pellets may sometimes be measured by the bushel, and afford an opportunity to prove, beyond the possibility of dispute, the nature of their food during the whole time.

In the *Zoologist* for May, 1897, Mr. Coward records the result of investigating the pellets, fifty-four in number, found at the foot of two trees in Cheshire. They contained bones of eight sparrows, one blue-tit, one rat, fourteen house-mice, twenty-six long-tailed field-mice, one water-vole, sixty field-voles, three bank-voles, forty-nine shrews, three water-shrews, and one lesser-shrew.

Again, in the *Zoologist* for May, 1898, Mr. Cordeaux describes the bushels of castings taken from a blown-down elm, tenanted by owls for forty-five years. Remains were identified of "a vast number of the common mouse, and some long-tailed and short-tailed field-mice, the skull of a starling, and hundreds of the skulls and upper mandibles of the house-sparrow. The mice and sparrows had, no doubt, been seized from the stack sides, for I have often seen the owls thus employed, or sitting on the watch hard by on some post of vantage. The tenant could never understand how it was that I was so anxious that the owls should be left unmolested, and this exhibition of the *disjecta membra* of hundreds of mice and sparrows has come like a revelation to him. Farmers here have an absurd idea that owls enter their pigeon-cotes and carry off the young pigeons, and it appears impossible to persuade them to the contrary"

The owls frequently do enter pigeon-cotes, but only to nest there themselves peaceably, without molesting in any way their neighbours, the original tenants.

Only last week I took some pellets from an immense oak, up whose hollow trunk I had to scramble from inside like a chimney-sweep. Here a Tawny owl was resting, and flew out on being disturbed. The pellets were composed of mouse fur, and outside were the hard and glittering wing-cases of beetles.

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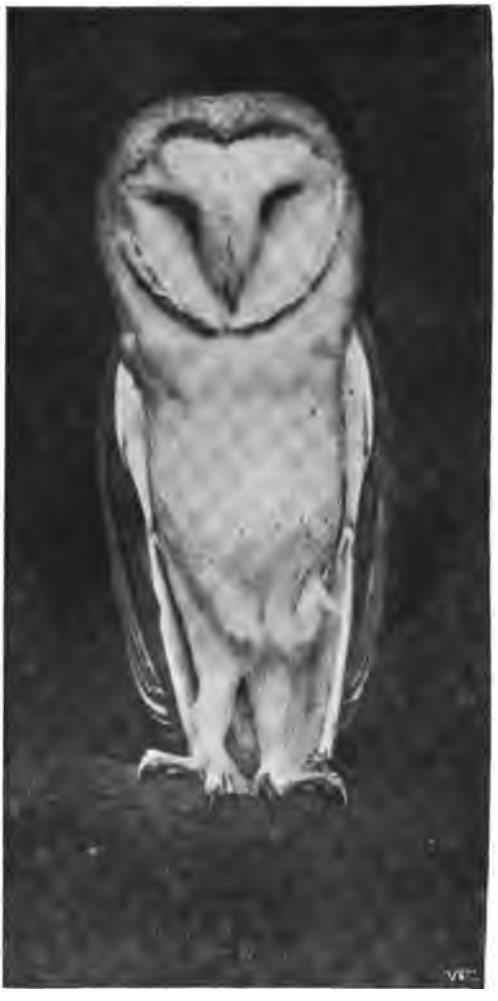
It will be noticed that in the above records there is no mention of the remains of any birds other than sparrows, except one blue-tit and one starling. No remains of a single game bird or animal are included in the list, and yet ninety-nine gamekeepers out of a hundred kill all owls as vermin, and hang them up in their "museums" to testify to their own ignorance and pig-headedness.

Though owls are commonly classed as birds of the night which nest in hollow trees, there is a migratory species which yearly visits us from Scandinavia, arriving, as a winter migrant, about November. A few remain to breed, in ever-decreasing numbers, in suitable localities, such as the Broads district in Norfolk, where they are known as marsh owls.

But whenever any part of the country is visited by a plague of voles, then these owls, with the wonderful knowledge possessed by birds of any unusual abundance of food, flock to the place in numbers, and remain to nest until the supply of food begins to diminish.

YOUNG BARN OWL.



BARN OWL.

The good done by these birds is clearly set forth in the Report of the Committee appointed by the Board of Agriculture on the vole plague in Scotland in 1893. As a consequence of the vast multiplication of these mischievous little rodents, which had almost devastated many farms over a large district, the Short-eared owls flocked to the infected spot in large numbers, and not only remained to breed, but owing to the abundance of their favourite food, laid an unusual number of eggs and reared more than one brood in the season. Whereas six is the usual clutch, they then laid from eight to thirteen eggs. One shepherd counted fourteen nests on his ground, and a small wood on another farm was described as being densely covered with "castings" composed of the bones and fur of voles.

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Most of the witnesses examined by the Committee not only bore witness to the efficiency of the owls in arresting the increase

NEST OF BARN OWL.

of the plague, but ascribed its origin to the killing down by game-preservers of owls, kestrels, and weasels.

The plumage of the Short-eared owl is beautifully assimilated in colour to the dry grass and bracken, and, like the Barn owl, it can alter the whole shape of its face, whereby the expression is modified to a great extent. When alert or alarmed, the ear tufts are depressed and the face is nearly round, and in a strong light the pupils of the eyes are reduced to black points, leaving the rest of the eye a bright clear yellow; while at rest, the ears are erected, and a bristly moustache of coarse hairs round the beak gives the bird a very strange appearance.

The "ears" in this species and the other horned or cared owls are, of course, not ears at all, but merely tufts of feathers, in no way connected with the organ of hearing, and they can be erected or depressed at the will of the bird. The true ear is an immense and complicated cavity, occupying nearly the whole side of the head, which is very large and is concealed by the edge of the facial disc.

One of our illustrations shows the ear cavity of a Short-eared owl as taken from a dead specimen. By lifting up the movable mask or facial disc and pinning it back, the large extent of the organs of hearing are plainly to be seen, and account for the wondrous faculty whereby owls can detect the slightest rustle of their timid prey as they forage about in the darkness of the night.

This bird seems a very silent one, the only noises I have ever heard being a hissing and

SHORT-EARED OWL.

EAR OF SHORT-EARED OWL.

a clapping or snapping of the beak when disturbed or angry.

The Tawny owl, whose weird note breaks the silence of the night in so startling a manner, is a frequenter of woods and forests. In some patriarchal oak or hollow ash it sleeps away the hours of daylight, to sally forth on silent wings at the approach of night, dropping noiselessly from time to time upon some unwary mouse. In the nesting season these are carried off to feed the young owlets, either in a hollow tree or in an old wood-pigeon's nest or squirrel's drey.

The Long-eared owl also makes use of old

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nests of other birds or squirrels in which to lay its eggs very early in the year, sometimes while snow is still on the ground. The shady recesses and sombre gloom of a fir wood suit the nocturnal habits of this species. It is also very silent, and its presence is often unsuspected; but the young owls in

TAWNY OWL.

the nest make a noise which much resembles the mewing of a kitten.

The sight of an owl which has been disturbed from his usual hiding-place during the day, as he flies with uncertain and wavering flight to another shelter, is the signal for universal excitement among all the small birds in the neighbourhood, which mob the unfortunate owl on all sides. Their victim appears too much bewildered to resent their hostile attitude. Tits of all sorts, blackbirds, thrushes, chaffinches, and other common birds congregate, scolding vigorously in their various languages what they consider as their common enemy. Perhaps it is only a similar feeling to that which prompted the collier in *Punch*, at sight of an unoffending stranger: "I say, Bill, 'ere's a stranger! 'Eave 'arf a brick at him!" I

BONES FROM OWL "CASTINGS."

A rat skull and five shrew-mice skulls (the latter all from one pellet) illustrate the real character of the bird's diet.

once saw a Short-eared owl, just arriving on the Lincolnshire coast after his long flight over the German Ocean, mobbed and annoyed by a lot of rooks.

So well known is this habit among Continental bird-catchers, that using a Little owl tethered on a perch to attract small birds is a well-known and recognised method of procedure in Italy, and possibly in other parts.

Though all owls have something odd and

SHORT-EARED OWL'S NEST.

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comical in their appearance, no species has such comical and amusing ways as the Little owl.

The commonest owl with us is the Barn owl, White owl, or Screech owl. This, while nesting often in hollow trees in parks and woods, does not shun the presence of man, but nests also in barns, churches, pigeon-cotes, and old houses. Here their uncanny hissings and snorings have been known to occasion great alarm to those who have been

POLE-TRAP.

YOUNG LONG-EARED OWL.

ignorant of the cause of these curious nocturnal sounds.

Tennyson, in his song "The Owl," is entirely mistaken in attributing the note "Tu-whit-tu-whoo" to the White owl.

> "Alone and warming his five wits
> The White owl in the belfry sits.
>
> Thy tu-whits are lulled, I wot
> Thy tu-whoos of yesternight," etc.

The note thus described belongs properly to the Tawny owl, though to my mind the real note sounds more like "Hoo-hoo."

It is, however, next to an impossibility to accurately describe in human language the notes of birds. This difficulty is shown in the very dissimilar descriptions given of the same note by competent observers, no two of whom, as a rule, syllable them the same.

Seebohm, in his "British Birds," bears witness to the great usefulness of the Barn owl, in one case recording the fact of twenty dead rats being found at one nest!

And what reward do they receive at our

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THE NORWEGIAN HAWK OWL, FROM A DRAWING BY G. E. LODGE.

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LONG-EARED OWL.

hands for the benefit they do and the useful, harmless lives they live?

Mr. Cordeaux, in an eloquent protest against the stupid barbarity of the pole-trap, shows the reward of virtue in such moving terms that I shall quote the whole passage, in the hope that possibly one game-preserver or land-owner who may have missed seeing the original passage may see and amend the error of his ways.

Speaking of the Short-eared owl in Lincolnshire, he says:—

"The owls have been exterminated by the keepers with their deadly pole-traps—a cruel form of bird murder which no humane person would tolerate or adopt. The useful Barn owl, too, has been ruthlessly destroyed, whenever opportunity offered, in the same cruel fashion. Noiselessly across the waste in the twilight, like a flitting phantom, comes the soft-winged owl, and, seeing as if placed ready to his use a post of vantage from which he may mark each stealthy movement of the mischievous field-vole, stays his flight to settle on the treacherous perch; and then during all that long, sad night—and too often, we fear, through the succeeding day—with splintered bone protruding through smashed flesh and torn tendon, hangs suspended in supreme agony, gibbeted head downwards, till death puts an end to his sufferings. Well may we ask, Can all the game-preserving in the world justify this ignorant and needless wrong?"

Many attempts have been made by ornithologists to introduce the Little owl by turning numbers of them out on their estates; and for a time they do well and breed, but no sooner do they wander outside the protected area than they generally come to grief. It is a common bird in Holland, France, Spain, Italy, and Greece. Of the other owls which sometimes appear in England, the fine Snowy owl and the Eagle owl are inhabitants of northern latitudes, as is also the small eared species, Tengmaln's owl, while Scop's owl, also eared, is found in the south of Europe. Then there is also the Hawk owl, a very common bird in Norwegian and Swedish forests, but which is an exceedingly rare straggler in this country.

THE REWARD OF VIRTUE.

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STRONG MAC.

By S. R. CROCKETT.*

CHAPTER I.

DECLARATION OF WAR.

A GREAT noise had been proceeding all the morning from the schoolhouse of Lowran, a noise which would without doubt have attracted the notice of the passers-by, had there been any to attract. But as there were none (except a stray cat, supposed to belong to Jake Allardyce, the village ne'er-do-well, and her friend Cruncher, a mongrel terrier of many picturesque attainments), the noise in Lowran School passed without notice.

The schoolhouse was situated in a wood, with only a square grassless space, miscalled the playground, before it. In reality it was where the Lowran boys did their fighting. A hundred yards away was the high road to the village, a quarter of a mile down the hill.

The school consisted of a single chamber, with a porch where girls left their hats, and some of the country pupils their dinner-baskets, and on whose steep roof the favourite boy of the day clambered to ring the cracked school-bell. The dimensions of Lowran schoolroom were these: eleven strides of Donald Gracie, the schoolmaster, took him from the writing-benches at the upper end to the door of the porch. With two more he put himself into an excellent strategic position, from which he could at once command the outer door of entrance with one hand, and with the other grope under the coats for hidden stragglers. Donald Gracie's faith in human nature, never strong, had suffered a sad shock on the day when, casually shutting the school door behind him for an instant, he had found Daid McRobb, the "deil" of the school, suspended by his hands from the peg under his own overcoat. Daid had answered to his name at the calling of the roll a moment before, and there was a mark in the register to show that he was then within his duty. But here, within twenty seconds of the closing of the roll-book, lo! Daid was found suspended by the clasped hands, his feet lifted from the ground and his angelic face upturned, when the schoolmaster drew aside the tails of his overcoat.

Daid was soundly thrashed. That was a matter of course. But Donald Gracie sat no whit the more comfortable on his chair of state for having temporarily settled Daid's account. His faith in human nature had suffered. He felt that he was being spied upon.

And the reason why he cared was simply this. There was a certain bottle in the breast-pocket of that overcoat—not a large, vulgar, black bottle, but a slim, pocketable, round-bottomed bottle, with a cork which could be drawn without any noise. It was after Donald Gracie had drawn the cork, and before he had set the bottle to his lips, that he discovered Daid McRobb.

But upon this warm, misty morning of late autumn or early winter (which you will) affairs in the schoolhouse had become more serious. About the school, all down the wheel-tracks on either side of the guttery road, the dead leaves lay dank and sodden. The thaw had come after the first nip of frost, and with it the day of the great ploughing match in which embattled Lowran met its neighbouring parish of Kirkanders.

Now, in Lowran, the summer conditions of tuition are as follows. The school consists of twenty to twenty-five village bairns, mostly under the age of ten, one or two "lassies" somewhat older, the children of a few well-to-do farmers who preferred a continuous education to receiving manual assistance in the fields—from their daughters. Their sons took the matter in their own hands and refused to attend school on any terms. Besides these, only the bees and the wood birds, with—a godsend alike to teacher and scholars—the not rare advent of Chattera, the pet squirrel of the village and the property of Crob McRobb, the father of the aforesaid Daid the Deil.

In winter, however, all was changed at Lowran. Dominie Gracie was allowed by all to "hae the knowledge and eke the airt of imparting it" (here the country-folk looked long at each other and nodded ever so slightly). "That is, if only——" one of them would add.

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"Aye, man, ye're speaking!"
"Aye!"

* * * * *

The schoolroom of Lowran was crowded in winter—specially so this 29th day of November of the year of grace 1812, the day of the great inter-parochial ploughing. There were young men of twenty—Jock Fairies of the Holm, James McCulloch of House of Muir, and Roy his brother, both of whom travelled ten miles down from the hills each winter morning. Besides these, thirteen able-bodied youths of all ages from sixteen to twenty crowded one entire side of the school, sitting at desks with their faces to the windows, while at the opposite end were gathered an equal number of mature young women, taking their winter's schooling after a summer spent in the hayfield, the barn, the byre, and the harvest rig.

The noise in the Lowran School came from the young men's bench. It had been understood that the Ploughing Match Day was to be a holiday. It had been a holiday, indeed, since the beginning of time. But for some reason Donald Gracie, ordinarily so amenable to suggestion, had on this occasion stiffened his back and denied the request of his scholars—denied it, too, with those bitter sarcastic words of which he had the secret. The girls, to whom ploughing matches were naught, had laughed, especially at the discomfiture of Sandy Ewan, the son of the big farmer of the Boreland of Kirkanders, who rode over every morning on his own pony to be taught surveying and mensuration by the all-accomplished Dominie of Lowran.

So it was small wonder that these strong-thewed Lords of the Congregation on the male side were in a state of open revolt. Their ostensible leader was this same Muckle Sandy Ewan, a great, raw-boned, horse-faced youth, with pale eyes that seemed "dibbled" into his face, so deeply were they set between his high cheek-bones and the hairless ridges of his eyebrows.

"If I have any authority in this school," Donald Gracie had said, "ye shall not go—no, not one of you—to these worse than Roman saturnalia. For if you disobey, I will not only report you to your parents, but I will call the roll every hour—and the loss of these six marks shall be held to disqualify for the competition in which most of the seniors are interested." This was the annual "Laird of Lowran Prize," a local foundation of the value of ten pounds a year, sufficient with ordinary personal endeavour to see the winner through a session at college even in these dear times of the wars.

The tumult began in low murmurings which rumbled from end to end of the senior boys' benches. The girls opposite bent their heads diligently over their copybooks. But the young men knew that these had eyes in the back of their heads, and that many pairs of pretty ears ached with listening.

Only on the cross-benches of the school, where the small fry were huddled, did the work of the school go on undisturbed. Donald Gracie stalked hither and thither as usual, his tawse under his arm. A stout ash-plant, emblem of authority, hung on a couple of pins above his desk, as a court of final appeal.

The Dominie of Lowran was a tall man, with weakish, watery eyes perpetually blinking, well-formed features, a broad white brow, hair wearing a little thin on top and falling grey and soft on the rolling collar of his blue coat. He took snuff constantly with a shaking hand, while a certain air of the fallen angel mingled with a sweet and pathetic dignity that told of a spirit within which, though it might sin, delighted not in iniquity nor walked willingly in the way of sinners. In short, Donald Gracie was that particularly hopeless thing, a secret drinker. Once on a time, long ago, he had been a minister. He was one no longer. The past had shut down upon that, but ten years ago certain old friends of his, moving influentially in high places, had obtained for him the dominieship of the parish of Lowran. And as year by year the new master sent bursars and college prizemen from little hill-girt Lowran to the Universities, his fame waxed greater in the land. And this though the shadow also grew upon his face—"tavert" was what the people called his aspect of Fallen Seraph—and though every scholar in the school had watched through the keyhole in turns, and could imitate the exact crook of the elbow with which the master conveyed the little round-bottomed bottle from his pocket to his mouth when he thought himself alone in the porch.

The noise grew and grew, echoing from end to end of the bench which looked towards the wood. Iron-shod clogs stuffed with straw in many barns, and great hob-nailed boots began to clack and beat out a sort of rhythmic march—*tramp, tramp, tramp-a-tramp!* Thus—with a halt between, and then all over again.

The Dominie's weak face grew slowly purple, and then paled again so deathly

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"'Ye besom!' he shouted, 'I fell ye dead for that!'"

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white that the weak reddish eyes seemed injected, and the nails of the shaking fingers were driven into the palm. Thrice he mounted the desk and strove to quell the turmoil.

"*Tramp, tramp—tramp-a-tramp!*"

Then the sudden quick-flaming anger of a weak man came upon the Dominie. He reached up his hand and lifted the ash-plant off the wooden pegs where it lay above his head. The watching school hushed itself with a sobbing intake of breath. There was a great broad silence. The bench of girls lifted itself with one movement, and where had been only ribbons, snoods of blue and black, long-plaited braids, plaits, and knots of hair, or loose-flowing tresses, row upon row of eager white faces now watched the Dominie's movements.

Donald Gracie took three strides to the top of the school and, lifting his hand high above his head, struck the biggest youth in the school, Muckle Sandy Ewan, heavily across the shoulders.

The *tramp-a-tramp* instinctively stilled itself at his approach. A certain respect for constituted authority held those who had grown up under his hand in Lowran. But there were three in that row of broad-shouldered lads who were not of the parish, and of these the leader, both by position and personal prowess, was undoubtedly Sandy Ewan.

As the blow fell, the school gasped. The next moment Muckle Sandy had risen, his great horse face distorted with anger. He caught the master by the throat, wrenched the ash-plant out of his hand, and threw him backwards.

Donald Gracie fell heavily over a form and lay motionless and stunned, his flash of weak energy quite gone from him. Biting his thick under-lip till the flat protruding teeth of his upper jaw showed wolfishly, Muckle Sandy stood over the motionless black figure with the ash-plant in his hand.

No one knows whether or not he intended to strike the Dominie. That question will never be settled. For just then a tall slender girl, dusky of face as a gipsy, with dark flashing eyes and hair flying over her back, leaped rather than rose from her seat at the head of the seniors' bench and was upon the victor in a moment. She was fifteen (or, it might be, sixteen) years of her age, but gave the observer that impression of maturity which comes so early in Galloway to dark girls of its aboriginal Pictish breed.

Then lo! in a moment all was changed. Before the school could breathe, before the Dominie could quaver a feeble protesting hand, before Muckle Sandy Ewan had time to lift his weapon, the ash-plant was wrenched out of his hand, and he received a couple of stinging cuts with the supple end of it, one across either side of the horse face—on the doughy cheeks of which presently appeared two weals, red and angry, neatly paired like carriage horses, or rather like the winning team at the ploughing match, and extending from the temple to the angle of the jaw, where the ridges faded into the bull neck.

Muckle Sandy Ewan vented his feelings, after the first intolerable smart of surprise, in a "gowl" of inarticulate wrath. He sprang towards the girl, his hand clutching to seize her. The fingers caught her light poor gown. It ripped under his grasp. The lace collar came away in his hand. It had been pinned on, and now, the point of one cutting downwards in that rude clutch, a thin line of red appeared upon the dusky tan of the girl's neck.

Muckle Sandy, stepping over the Dominie, pulled the girl towards him and made another snatch at the ash-plant. He missed it, and for the third time it stung him vehemently across one ear.

"Ye besom!" he shouted, "I fell ye dead for that!"

Muckle Sandy lifted up his great fist, and undoubtedly next moment the girl would have been lying beside the unconscious Dominie—had not something happened.

From the lower end of the bench a figure had detatched itself, lazily at first, certainly good humouredly.

"Strong Mac!" chorused the school, breathless with expectation.

"Haste ye, Strong Mac!" cried a voice, shrill and high, that of "Deil" McRobb; "he will kill the lassie! He's awfu' when he's angry! *I ken!*"

But Strong Mac did nothing hastily—only everything always at the right time. Muckle Sandy's hand was already descending when Strong Mac caught it from behind and swung the assailant round, as a big dog swings a little one when they are chained together. Muckle Sandy had the girl's white collar still in his hand as Strong Mac propelled him to the door, punted him down the playground in standing leaps, and at last flung him out on the road off the top-most step, where he lay looking up at the path by which he had come in a dazed way.

Strong Mac stood over his enemy threateningly.

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"D'ye want to fecht?" he demanded.

"Na, I dinna!" said Muckle Sandy Ewan.

"Gie me that collar, then!"

The collar was delivered up.

"Noo ye can gang to your plooin' match!" said Strong Mac with contempt, and betook himself back to the school. He had never held any part of a girl's dress in his hand before. There was a speck of red upon the inside—very tiny. Strong Mac started and flushed, though he had seen blood often enough. But—*never that.* Then he remembered that he had not kicked Muckle Sandy Ewan hard enough. He turned to repair the omission. But (for the time being) the resolve came too late. He received a stone as big as a goose egg between the shoulder blades, hurled with excellent aim, and a mocking shout fell on his ear.

"Poacher—deer-poacher—sheep-stealer—I'll see ye i' the gaol yet! My faither said sae!"

Strong Mac smiled. He had heard such threats often, and they moved him not at all. Roy McCulloch had a brother and a father. More, he had the side of the Black Muir, which none knew like himself—caves, morasses, forest, moss-hags. He would like to see anyone who could catch him there!

The school was buzzing like a hive when he entered. It stilled instinctively as his broad shoulders blocked up the doorway. The girl was standing with her face a ghastly white. She had tried to lift the Dominie, but could not manage it alone.

"Help me with my faither!" she said, looking at Strong Mac.

"Shall I send them awa'?" he queried, indicating the assembled school with a jerk of his head.

The expression of the girl's face firmed under his eye.

"No," she said; "I'll teach the school instead of my faither. And I'll call the roll every hour as he said he would!"

"Faith, then, I'll help ye, Dora Gracie!" cried Strong Mac, setting his back to the closed door which led into the porch. "Here—you, Jamie" (he indicated his brother), "an' you, Jock Fairies, carry the maister ben to his bed. Ye ken where to gang. Bring him to and leave him. Dora, call the roll. I'll see fair play."

CHAPTER II.

THE LOWRAN DOMINIE.

ADORA, or Dora Gracie was "a manse bairn." That is, she had been born, not in the purple, but in the true blue of Presbytery, in the "manse" of a pastor of a flock of human souls.

And so, measuring the descent, we begin to see whence Donald Gracie gat his bearing of Fallen Seraph. Nevertheless, no man of that name had, during the fifty years before this year of grace 1812, been a placed minister in the Kirk of Scotland. Yet duly ordained the Dominie of Lowran had been—and also in his day the citizen of no mean city.

Time was when, with the highest hopes, a certain younger son of the Laird of Balgracie (Balgracie of that ilk) had been licensed to preach the Word. It seemed throughout all the Lothians nothing less than a condescension, and religion itself rose in general estimation when young Donald Balgracie preached his first sermon. So handsome he was, too, so certain of the highest preferment, that his words came home with tenfold force to mothers of marriageable daughters. These last on their own account found him "interesting," though how such a man could want to be a minister, when he might have arrayed himself in scarlet and gone to the wars, was a mystery to them.

Balgracie of Balgracie was of an ancient family, somewhat sunk for a generation or two, but again restored to more than its former glories by that notable Virginia tobacco lord, Archibald Balgracie. This Archibald in 1789 succeeded his childless elder brother in the family estates, and used his great fortune (brought from the plantations) in buying back and adding to the former possessions of the Balgracies. He built himself a new mansion house and entertained in a manner which was the admiration or the envy, the heart-breaking or the pride of the three Lothians, according as the inhabitants went abroad to boast or remained at home to sneer.

The eldest son of the "tobacco lord" had succeeded to the business in Glasgow as he was in time to succeed to the family estates. Donald, the younger son, was, however, the general favourite, and owing to the frequent absences of his father and elder brother, it was his ill fortune to be reared at home by a triumvirate of aunts. These were the sisters of his father—women who remembered the former things, the poverty, the scanting and scrimping, the one lean serving man in the tightly buttoned coat, his hands grimed with the clods of the garden, smelling of the stable, who had waited at table and lectured them upon their

extravagant ways—till the day when their brother Archibald came home from the plantations, a widower, with a boy of fifteen, babe of seven months, and a great fortune.

Girzie, Isbel, and Adora Balgracie were variously known in the neighbourhood as the Three Graces, the Three Muses, the Three Fates, or the Three Furies, according to the humour of the speaker. In their youth the Balgracies had been tall slender girls, and, not without reason, thought very well of themselves. That was the hour when, without bitterness and with no back-spang of sarcasm, they had been called with easy assonance the Three Graces of Balgracie. A little later they took to writing verses. Tender these were, and very sentimental, conceived in the stiff rhyme royal of the period. You may stumble across some of them still in the later numbers of the *Scots Magazine*, when you are searching that delectable chronicle for Gretna Green marriages, wonderful providences, parish gossip, and early tidings of the death of kings. They are signed "Griselda," "Isabella," or "Adora," in turn; for the work of the Muses of Balgracie was a strict collaboration. Adora, the youngest, wrote the verses, humming the lines to herself as she went about her daily work, crooning them over to the whirl of the spinning-wheel and the twirl of the distaff. Then precise Isabella corrected and pruned the expressions—sucked out the sap, as it were; while, last of all, practical Griselda copied them out in a clear running hand and did the correspondence with the editor in Edinburgh.

As for their other two nicknames, both those who called them the Three Fates of Balgracie (because they were nobody's fate) and those who in their days of the sere leaf spoke of them as the Furies, knew as little of their kind hearts and unselfish lives as they did of the classics.

Yet, had they been the most fateful of Furies, they could hardly have done worse by Donald Balgracie. There can be no doubt that the neglect of his father, the years which divided him from his elder brother, and, above all, the ceaseless spoiling Donald Balgracie received from his three maiden aunts, were responsible, in part at least, for his downfall. After having been educated at home by an indulgent tutor, sent to college with much money at his disposal, thence returning to Balgracie each summer to lord it over the heritage of his brother (already up to his ears in business in Glasgow), Donald found himself suddenly minister of a rich but lonely parish lying at the back of the Pentlands.

With great promptness he provided against the loneliness by marrying his late landlady's daughter, a sweet and simple girl with the Edinburgh roses abloom on her cheeks.

But his father was mortally offended, with the offence of a man who has taken it for granted that all will go as he wishes it without his needing to stir one of his little fingers. From that time forth all Archibald Balgracie's pride and hope were centred in his elder son, whom he loved to see acting his part on the crowded mart, countering with inherited shrewdness the changing wants and cunning devices of customers.

But Donald—had he not given him a good education and all his own way? Had he not piloted him by influence into a respectable and lucrative position? And now merely to please himself he must needs marry a beggar! Well, let him please himself and see what would come of it.

So Donald—that is to say, the Reverend Donald Balgracie, of the parish of Maxtone Easter—went his way apart from his father. The triumvirate of aunts—Griselda, Isabella, and Adora—was forbidden to hold communication with him, even to think of him. And as for his brother William in Glasgow, he had no desire to do either.

All might have gone well, however, with the household in the Manse of Maxtone Easter if the life of the young wife had been spared. In his dreams Donald Balgracie often found himself sitting in the twilight with Lucy his wife, holding her hand and speaking low of that which God was sending to them.

But when a few months later Donald Balgracie sat alone in a wide house with a week-old infant wailing overhead in the arms of the hired nurse, what wonder is it that the man's heart sank within him? His was of no strong nature. He had never been taught self-control. And so—and so—as the long winter passed, draggingly endlessly, there came a change, noted of the people, over their young minister. At first, with unusual charity, it had been set down to grief for his wife; but after—the matter became all too plain, then clamant, then openly scandalous. The Presbytery, always a little hostile, took the matter in hand. Sons of the people themselves, they resented the scions of rich families entering into the best heritages of the Kirk. On the other

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hand, the people of Maxtone, all but one or two, stood by their minister.

"He is young—he will mend," they said. "Grief hath made him mad!" "And moreover" (they added) "what better are you his judges—you, moderator, with your roisterous Market Mondays—you, clerk of the Presbytery, with your unhallowed card parties? Answer us that."

But moderator and clerk answered not. They took action instead. And at the age of twenty-nine Donald Balgracie found himself a man outcast, degraded, unfrocked, without means, and with a little daughter to support. His father's sole anxiety was that his son should vanish for ever out of his ken. He offered to send him to the plantations, where the old Virginian planter still had important interests, telling him frankly that if he lived, he might consider himself leniently dealt with; and if he died in the tobacco fields—why, so much the better for all concerned.

As for his three aunts, they only grieved and prayed in secret, and at last gained a reluctant consent from their brother, that if Donald would give up the babe, they might have the bringing of her up.

"And see that ye make a better job of the lass than ye did of the lad," Archibald Balgracie had added grimly, as he went out.

But Donald would in no wise consent to be parted from his little Adora. As to that, at least, he was adamant. And so, with influence made through one of his old college professors, the unfrocked minister became a parish schoolmaster in far-off Galloway. Donald Balgracie became Donald Gracie, and Adora his daughter grew up to be the sweetest and winsomest little maid that ever trod down the daisies in the Lowran fields.

Sole of all the parish the Dominie's story was known to Dr. Cyrus Meiklewham, the minister. For so the professor judged right.

"At least, it shall not leap out upon him like a lion from a bush," he had said. And Dr. Cyrus Meiklewham, though not clever, proved a dungeon of silent discretion.

For long after this downfall Donald Gracie walked before men irreproachable. True, the shadow did not wholly depart from his face. The Fallen Seraph look remained—nay, perhaps grew more pathetic. The folk whispered and smiled, but it was tolerantly. For much is forgiven in Galloway to one with the name of a great scholar. The Dominie's Latin was without equal. "And what the worse is he of a human failing or twa—like yours and mine? And maybe, gin a' were kenned" (so ran the shrewd comment), "there may be some others in the parish quite unfit to cast the first stane at the Dominie."

So there was no open scandal—nothing, indeed, at all like it—for many years. Nevertheless, Donald Gracie was already an old man at forty-three, and his daughter Dora had the shadow of a shadow upon her young face. The moist eye, the slack lip, the flushed face, the trembling hand, all told the same tale. The demon who had put out his head at Maxtone Easter, was not exorcised. Nor, perhaps, could be by any power of man.

CHAPTER III.

HOW ADORA GRACIE KEPT SCHOOL.

"GANG ye ben and attend to your faither," said Strong Mac to Adora when his brother James and his companion came back from laying the master on his bed; "I'll see to it that the schule is in fine fettle for the learnin' when ye come back."

Adora sped upon her errand through the door which connected the schoolroom with the master's house. Then, with his back still against the porch entrance, Roy McCulloch lazily propounded his scholastic philosophy.

"Ye see," said he, confidentially, to the assembled scholars, "there's you, and here's me, and in yonder's the lassie! There's the lassie to gie ye your lessons. (And she can do it as weel as her faither!) There's you that's gaun to learn them, and there's me to see that they are learnt. Hae ye a' gotten haud o' that?"

He turned to the bench of the young men, the sometime haughty Lords of the Lowran Congregation. Few of them were looking at him. Most regarded their copybooks with an absolute attention. Some figured diligently.

"It's to you I'm speakin' maistly!" he went on. "Lads, listen to me: if there's ony three o' ye that are o' opinion that I canna break their backs at yae time, stand oot here and hae it ower afore the lassie comes back. For if there's as muckle as a word or a black look frae ye after that—weel, ye ken me. Somebody will, maybe, get hurt!"

No one moved. The attention to work was absolute. Nothing like it had been seen in Donald Gracie's time.

Still more lazily Strong Mac stretched himself in his ruddy homespun clothes and the blue rig-and-fur stockings banded with

strips of brown leather at the knee. His brother Jamie looked across at him and winked.

"To your books!" cried Roy McCulloch to his brother, with a threatening gesture. And the whole bench of girls regarded him with admiration.

"And a' that for the sake of a dominie's lass!" whispered Charlotte Webster, who was eighteen, and had had two lads come wanting to carry her books home on the same night, which was considered a great honour in the school.

"Oh! he just does it to show aff," said little Kate Hannay, "because he's strong. Lads are like that. I dare say he wad do as muckle for you."

Charlotte Webster, a peach-blossomed blonde, sniffed contemptuously.

"Huh!" she said, wrinkling her nose, "it will be a lang day and a short yin afore either Roy McCulloch or the like o' him gets the chance. I wad like to see him dare to speak to me! His faither is nae better than——"

"Less talking there!" said Strong Mac calmly, looking directly at the place on the girls' bench where sat the disdainful blonde. Charlotte Webster bridled and tossed her head.

"Aye, Chairlie, it's to you I'm speakin' noo!"

The girl turned upon him.

"Keep yoursel' to yoursel'," she said; "I'm no feared o' ye. Ye canna lift your hand to a lassie—you wi' your talk o' breakin' backs and showin' aff!"

Strong Mac was not in the least put out by this direct defiance. He did not take his back from the school door. He only lazily crossed one foot over the other and regarded the square points of his huge boots.

"Na," he answered slowly, "I canna. That true. But maybe ye wad want me to tell the schule wha carried the last luggie into the milk-hoouse for ye on Saturday nicht? Aye—and wha——?"

But with a quick rising flush and a single swift appealing look, the blonde turned away and dropped her head upon her copybook.

The school tittered. It knew Charlotte Webster. In a far corner somebody gasped and choked with suppressed laughter.

"Deil McRobb, that's you," said Strong Mac. "That's you. I ken yer sniffle! Come here, Deil!"

The Deil approached, trembling in spite of his formidable cognomen.

"It wasna me," he declared. "Look—I'm laughin' nane!"

The dictator of Lowran School lifted an ink-bottle from the master's desk.

"Drink the ink!" he commanded.

The Deil did so without the least compunction. Then from his own class there arose first a whispering, then a laugh.

"If ye please, Strong Mac," said a piping voice, "he likes it. He aye drinks up a' the ink, and we get pawmies for it frae the Dominie!"

The Deil, licking his lips, turned towards his peers with an expression which said clearly: "Wait, my bonnies, till I get ye oot!"

"Weel, *than*," said Strong Mac, "gang an' learn your lesson standing on your head. That will keep ye quaite, surely, Deil?"

He erected the Deil with the soles of his feet against a convenient wall, arranged his spelling-book to suit these unusual conditions of study, and left him to his meditations.

At this moment Adora Gracie came in.

She found the school hushed in studious calm. Strong Mac stood on guard at the door as she had left him. She nodded as much as to say that her father was in the fair way of recovery.

"Have they been a trouble to you?" she asked in a low tone of Roy McCulloch.

He shook his hêad almost sadly.

"Never a *whush* oot o' the head o' ony craitur amang them!" he said. "What class will ye tak' first? The Muckle Laitin?"

"I think so," said Adora quietly. She went to her father's desk, opened it, and got out the version books and a Virgil, well-thumbed and with many notes scribbled on the margin.

Strong Mac announced in a stentorian voice, which made the sparrows and robins picking up the crumbs from the dinner-pokes outside fly off in a flurry—

"*Muckle Laitiners—stand to the chalk line!*"

This announcement disarranged the bench occupied by the Lords of the Congregation. For a long moment they hesitated. Then, slowly and reluctantly, one after another disengaged themselves, as if weighing alternatives. Groups of two or three whispered together in clusters.

"Keep your heads sindry a wee farther," cried the watchful Mac, "or maybe I'll bring them thegither raither sharper than ye bargain for!"

Automatically the class formed itself complete save for one place at the bottom

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"'Muckle Laitiners—stand to the chalk line!'"

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which ought to have been filled by Sandy Ewan, expelled for cause. Before Strong Mac himself took this vacant place, he solemnly reached down the ash-plant, which had been replaced on the pegs above the desk.

"Noo, lads, let's hae fair hornie," he cried; "ye ken the rules. Yae palmie for a 'minie,' twa for a 'majie,' an' three for a 'maxie'! And the Lord help me," he added, "for I ken no a word o' the lesson this day. I declare it's gane clear oot o' my thick head!"

At this announcement of pains and penalties an ominous muttering made itself apparent, in the midst of which Strong Mac heard the words: "We will no tak' our licks frae a lassie!"

"Weel," said Strong Mac placidly, "that's reasonable. But hear ye me, Ec McKimmon—gin ye willna tak' your palmies frae a lassie, ye shall tak' them from *me*. Ye can hae your choice, my man. Drive on, Dora!"

Adora Gracie was by far the best scholar in the school. That went without saying. Two years ago, when she was no more than thirteen, she had been at the head in every subject at the annual examination by the Presbytery. Now she had been for two more years her father's companion in his reading. He talked to her in all their walks together. During the winter evenings they studied together. Moreover, there was not within the Lowran School young man or maiden who would have dreamed of disputing that pre-eminence.

But to "tak' it frae a lassie!" That was strong meat, indeed.

However, it was Dora's arm executive (as it were), even Strong Mac himself, who first stumbled—perhaps intentionally and to encourage the others. At any rate, the mistake was an undoubted "maxie"—the largest kind of error possible—and good, upon the face of it—or, rather, upon the palm of it—for three stripes.

He stepped forward, ostentatiously drawing down his cuff.

"Noo, Dora," he said encouragingly, "lay on as if ye were beating carpets! Gar the stour flee!"

And Adora Gracie, who quite understood the importance of the occasion, put some pith into the operation.

"Harder!" whispered Strong Mac under his breath.

Whereupon Adora put a little of her agitation into the last two strokes of the "maxie," so that the yelp which Strong Mac emitted had at least so convincing a naturalness that the junior benches squeaked in sympathy.

After that it came easier. Jock Fairies misquoted a Latin rule in his parsing, and received a "majie"—which, as he said proudly, "left him wi' something to think aboot." Daid the Deil giggled audibly thereat, and was pounced upon for disturbing the school. He came forward smiling at what he was about to receive. What he did carry away with him changed the fashion of his countenance. He returned to his place with his mouth the shape of an O, softly rubbing his palm upon that part of the body used by schoolboys as an emollient.

Only Ec McKimmon, a sturdy youth from the outland borders of the parish, and supposed to be a partisan of the expelled Muckle Sandy, looked for a moment like refusing chastisement. But Adora was firm. Never had the Senior Latinists seen so strict a master.

"Stand out, Ec McKimmon!" she said. "That was a 'maxie.'"

He hesitated, growling under his breath. Adora stamped her foot.

"Here, Dora," cried Strong Mac, "gie *me* haud o' the ash-plant!"

Thus peremptorily was rebellion stamped out in Lowran School, and the faces of the law-abiding exalted. At the close of the lesson the class returned to its several places and relations upon the benches on the "wood" (or male) side of the school.

Adora had, in more senses than one, made her mark. The classes which followed were child's play to the "Muckle Laitin." But now the noon recess approached, and the faces of the scholars brightened with expectation. What would happen then? A low whispering began to pass from bench to bench, which Strong Mac felt must be repressed. He rose presently and went up to the desk, where Adora Gracie was looking over copybooks in a business-like way, marking them according to her father's system, with the degree of credit attaching to the neatness and blotlessness of each. As Roy McCulloch approached and saluted, Adora flashed a swift blue "M" across his own page. It meant "Moderate," and involved staying in at night for half an hour to write another. Strong Mac chuckled.

"She's coming on fine," he said to himself. "By my faith! this schule will find itsel' properly teached afore we hae dune wi' it—her an' me!"

Adora looked up from her work with a cold and educational eye.

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"Well, McCulloch?" she said severely.

"If ye please, maister," he replied, "it's time for the schule to be lettin' oot."

But under his breath he added, covered by the whispered storm which his remark created: "*Make me a monitor, quick, and gang oot to see your faither. I want to speak to them.*"

"Very well, McCulloch," she said, following his lead; "you can go to your seat."

The murmur hushed as Adora tapped the desk. She rose, gathered up her papers, read out the marks, and delivered the copy-books with comments complimentary or the reverse. Then she locked the master's desk with her father's snap of the lid.

"I am going out for a moment. See that there is good behaviour. Roy McCulloch, I name you monitor" (she hesitated a moment, before achieving her phrase, between "without prejudice" and "with powers," deciding on the latter)—"monitor with powers!" she added emphatically.

Strong Mac rose lazily as the girl passed out by the private door.

"'With powers,'" he said; "ye ken what that means. Noo, I hae a word. It's this—ye are to come back in the afternoon. For ony boy that gangs to plooin' match—*six, frae me!* For ony lassie that collogues wi' that brute Muckle Sandy Ewan—*we'll no let her in, no though she greets at the door!* And, hark ye, cronies," he continued, suddenly dropping his monitorial manner, "the less said aboot this at hame the better. If we canna gar Lowran Schule gang on as it should without the help o' Kirkanders and Sandy Ewan, it's a doom's peety!"

With this final appeal to the fears of the boys, to the curiosity of Eve's sex, and to the patriotism of both, the temporary "monitor" dismissed the school.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PLOUGHING MATCH.

THE ploughing match between the parish of Lowran and that of Kirkanders was a most important annual fixture. It was looked forward to with the greatest anxiety on the part of both antagonists. The judges were selected from the surrounding parishes, mainly from the Dullarg, Minnibole, and Stonybyres.

On this occasion two of these were burly tenant farmers. Joined with them was a sporting laird on his promotion as Deputy-Lieutenant, with the probable reversion of the county seat in Parliament when the present (aged) occupant retired. The three judges walked about through the soft droopy mist circled with visible halos. Pride was in their port, a flush on their cheeks—

> The half of whilk was pride o' place,
> The ither half was malt!

This last was in no way surprising, for at the great ploughing match (which was held alternately at the farm of Holm, as the nearest to the village, and upon the Kirkanders farm of Boreland, tenanted by the father of Muckle Sandy) it was expected of the tenant whose field was ploughed that he should provide the most copious refreshments. It was partly to keep his son out of the way of all this that Fairies senior had insisted upon Jock going to school as usual. And it was certainly a most self-denying respect for the Fifth Commandment which, after considerable debate with himself, led Jock on this occasion to obey his father.

To flee from temptation was one thing, however; to return at the hour of noon another. On his way home he had to pass the field. He was yet a quarter of a mile off when the odour of whisky came to him down wind. Jock halted and sniffed knowingly.

"Um!" he said meditatively; "I'se wager that there's some gye queer plooin' on the Benty Rigs this day. That's Lucky Greentrees' barley broo, as I'm a leevin' sinner. I wad ken the smell o't in—heeven!"

As Jock Fairies drew near the field his heart began to beat audibly. He counted himself no mean ploughman—though, being his father's son and the heir to one of the largest "nest-eggs" in the parish, it did not become him to show his powers in an open competition. Yet, since all scenes of excitement are rare in a country district, it was all the harder upon the heir of Fairies of Holm to be obliged to view the scene from the other side of the dyke.

The Benty Rigs was a field which had been chosen for the varying yet equable conditions which it offered to the competitors. Its surface was generally level, but rose into a whaleback in the middle, with a steep descent which necessitated the use of guide-posts along the ridge as the teams went and came.

The "opening" of the furrow was in a light sandy soil near the dykeside, where the Holm burn comes down to join Lowran Water. The "turning" had to be accomplished more critically in soft boggy soil, half clay, half black peat—on the edge of the

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rush-covered morass which had given to the original field its name of the Benty Rigs.

Small wonder, then, that it was a sigh long and deep which Jock Fairies heaved when he came in full sight of the labouring teams—twenty of them, some taking the slope of the ridge, some slowly dipping behind it, others turning into a new furrow with smacking undulations of the reins and sharp cries of encouragement to the horses.

The steam rose in clouds from the work-warmed animals into the moist air. The teams took the shoulder of the ridge enveloped in a cloud of it. Pillars of cloud rose visibly from beyond the crest of the hill, marking the positions of those which were temporarily out of sight. Wherever you could get away from the pervasive odour of Lucky Greentrees' whisky, the dank, pointless, "back-end" air smelt like washing-day.

But the keenness of men and horses alike! No haste, however; matters were far too serious for that. The eyes of all their world were upon each competitor. They behoved to be wary, ready, resourceful, dashing, cautious, all at once, these pilots of the dry land, these dauntless navigators of the red-streaming furrow.

There they went! And, indeed, you would have sympathised with our stalwart Peri at Paradise gate had you seen the show, as Jock Fairies saw it, from the far side of the dyke, barriered off by the tables on which were set out the oat-cake in farles and the black bottles of Lucky Greentrees' fiery malten brew. That man in the grey clothes and leather leggings was the ganger, or exciseman, the successor in office of a certain ill-starred customs officer of the name of Robert Burns. And he did not need to make any professional examination to know that Lucky Greentrees had satisfied His Majesty's dues on account of the beverage at present supplied. No self-respecting smuggler or illicit distiller would have disgraced himself by touching the like of it.

The judges walked to and fro importantly, lords of all, the sporting squire high-stocked, slim, and jaunty in the wasp-waisted London fashions of a year ago, the two farmers clad in weather-beaten blue and bottle-green, with silver buttons as large as florins on their waistcoats and starring the huge pocket-flaps of their surtouts.

The whole of the field was not taken up by the teams. A large piece was marked off for the personal competition to be decided in the afternoon. The order of the general match was this: a Lowran man and one from Kirkanders were placed time about, beginning from the right of the field. Each man had his portion, which he must finish within a given period. And the Laird of Rusco, his stop-watch in his hand, stood checking the times.

Jock Fairies stood watching, with a great desire to participate. The personal competitions were just about to begin, as one after another of the twenty teams finished their piece, and with a mighty heave upon the plough-sticks and a shout to the horses, the pilot slid the share clear of the field of combat.

It would, however, be some time before the judges finished their work. They must cast up the number of "points," and the total achieved by Lowran or Kirkanders decided the fate of the day—that is, the "day general." The "day particular," or, as it was importantly called, the "All Comers Single-handed Cup," was the blue ribbon of the county, and the dandiest ploughmen from far and near came to try their luck. Some of these borrowed a neighbour's team. Others approached a former master, with whom they had parted amicably, and obtained for the occasion the use of a well-kenned and trusty "pair." For to know one's horses is many points in favour of a ploughman.

What was the anger of Jock Fairies to see with his own eyes Muckle Sandy Ewan conducting a team from his father's farm towards the rigs appointed for the Single-hand competition! Sandy also saw Jock, as was abundantly obvious from his greeting.

"Oh, Jock! Lassie-boy Jock," he shouted, "gang and get your pawmies frae a lassie! I'm gaun to win the cup. Rab Telfer says there's nane can stand up to me; and yin o' the judges owes siller to my faither!"

Even "dancing mad," as he afterwards acknowledged himself to have been, Jock Fairies knew that this last was a vain aspersion, and he only wished that the particular judge referred to had been near enough to hear. But all three were at the upper end of the field, watching the remaining competitors turning into the last home stretch.

Jock Fairies could bear the tantalising scene no longer. He hurried home, rushed across the farmyard, in at the back door, and, without stopping for explanation, helped himself to a plate of broth from the pot which stood at the side of the fire simmering gently. Then he cut himself a slice or two

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"The ploughing match."

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of cold mutton-ham and devoured them cursorily between two scones, using the "comfortable family broth" as a beverage, bite and sup about, with his impromptu sandwich.

In five minutes he was back again at the field. He stopped half-heartedly at the open gate. He hesitated. He was lost. Entering hurriedly, he hastened to the part of the Benty Rigs where the portions for the Single-hand were marked off. More than half of the competitors had already commenced. Sandy Ewan had turned once and was coming back. A little crowd of ploughmen who did not intend to try the double event, as well as not a few ordinary spectators, clustered about the rig-end waiting for him to come in.

Sandy was a sturdy well-made fellow and had a natural eye for ploughing. The Kirkanders folk were inclined to put their money on him, not only because his father was their richest man, but because of the interest attaching to his youth. It would be a feather in their cap if a Kirkanders laddie fresh from school should win the cup.

The hope of Lowran was a grey-headed old cotman from the Upper Crae, whose eye was like that of the captain of a ship, and who always carried off the prize for working his horses the most quietly, as well as that for the longest period of service under one master. Robin Kirk was the name of him.

But though he was probably the most scientific ploughman on the field, Robin was already tired with his work in the general competition, while the furrows in the new portion of the Benty Rigs were considerably more difficult, owing to a stiffish compost of clay in the hollow to the left of the ridge.

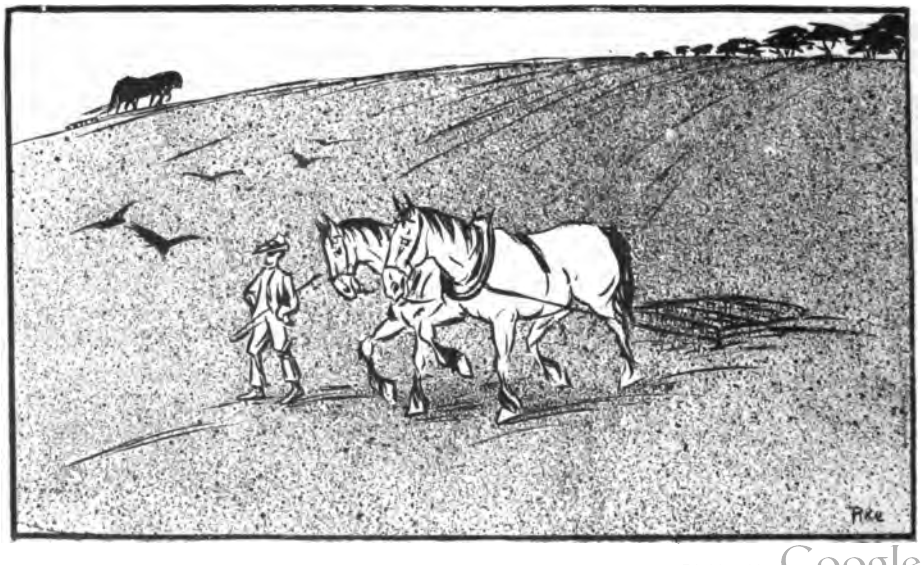
"Oh! burn my stockin' feet!" cried Jock Fairies, "he's beatin' Robin! The auld man hasna the weight to haud her nose to the dour land! We'll be disgraced—fair disgraced—and by that great nowt o' a Sandy Ewan!"

There was a slight cheer from the Kirkanders men as Muckle Sandy came in.

"Perfect! Richt to a hair!" "The exact deepness!" "What a turn!" These were some of the exclamations, half smothered, indeed, but most encouraging—meant to be so, too. With a pleased look on his face, Muckle Sandy bent himself away again, like a clever boat on a new tack.

"Oh! wha will we get—wha will we get?" moaned Jock Fairies. "Oh! if Strong Mac wad only come! But he willna, the waster! He could ploo that great nowt Sandy oot o' creation! But he willna—he willna! He's just fair daft aboot that Dominie's lassie! *I wish a' lassies were dead!*"

(*To be continued.*)



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THE LOVER, THE GIRL, AND THE ONLOOKER.

By E. Nesbit.*

THE two were alone in the grassy courtyard of the ruined castle. The rest of the picnic party had wandered away from them, or they from it. Out of the green-grown mound of fallen masonry by the corner of the chapel a great may-bush grew, silvered and pearled on every scented, still spray. The sky was deep, clear, strong blue above, and against the blue the wall-flowers shone bravely from the cracks and crevices of ruined arch and wall and buttress.

"They shine like gold," she said. "I wish one could get at them!"

"Do you want some?" he said, and on the instant his hand had found a strong jutting stone, his foot a firm ledge; and she saw his figure, grey flannel against grey stone, go up the wall towards the yellow flowers.

"Oh, don't!" she cried. "I don't *really* want them! Please not—I wish——"

Then she stopped, because he was already some twelve feet from the ground, and she knew that one should not speak to a man who is climbing ruined walls. So she clasped her hands and waited, and her heart seemed to go out like a candle in the wind, and to leave only a dark, empty, sickening space where, a moment before, it had beat in anxious joy. For she loved him, had loved him these two years, had loved him since the day of their first meeting. And that was just as long as he had loved her. But he had never told his love. There is a code of honour—right or wrong—and it forbids a man with an income of a hundred and fifty a year to speak of love to a girl who is reckoned an heiress. There are plenty who transgress the code, but they are in all the other stories.

So he drove his passion on the curb and mastered it. Yet the questions, "Does she love me? Does she know I love her? Does she wonder why I don't speak?" and the counter-questions, "Will she think I don't care? Doesn't she, perhaps, care at all? Will she marry someone else before I've earned the right to try to make her love me?" afforded a see-saw of reflection, agonising enough, for those small hours of wakefulness when we let our emotions play the primitive games with us. But always the morning brought strength to keep to his resolution. He saw her for three long times every year, when Christmas, Easter and Midsummer brought her to stay with an aunt, and brought him home to his people for holidays. Also, though he denied himself the joy of speaking in words, he had let his eyes speak more than he knew.

And now he had reached the wall-flowers high up, and was plucking them and throwing them down, so that they fell in a wavering, bright shower round her feet. She did not pick them up. Her eyes were on him, and the empty place where her heart used to be seemed to swell till it almost choked her.

He was coming down now. He was only about twenty-five feet from the ground. There was no sound at all but the grating of his feet as he set them on the stones, and the movement, now and then, of a bird in the ivy. Then came a rustle, a gritty clatter, loud falling stones—his foot had slipped and he had fallen. No, he was hanging by his hands above the great refectory arch, and his body swung heavily with the impetus of the checked fall. He was moving along now, slowly, hanging by his hands; now he grasped an ivy root—another—and pulled himself up till his knee was on the moulding of the arch.

She would never have believed anyone who should have told her that only two minutes had been lived between the moment of his stumble and the other moment when his foot touched the grass and he came towards her among the fallen wall-flowers. He was rather paler than usual.

She was a very nice girl, and not at all forward, and I cannot understand or excuse her conduct. She made two steps towards him with her hands held out—caught him by the arms just above the elbow, shook him angrily, as one shakes a naughty child, looked him once in the eyes, and buried her face in his neck, sobbing long, dry, breathless sobs.

Even then he tried to be strong.

"Don't," he said tenderly, "don't worry. It's all right—I was a fool. Pull yourself together—there's someone coming."

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"I don't care," she said, for the touch of his cheek pressed against her hair told her all that she wanted to know. "Let them come—I don't care! Oh! how could you be so silly and horrid? Oh, thank God! thank God! Oh! how could you?"

Of course, a really honourable young man would have got out of the situation somehow. He didn't. He accepted it—with his arms round her and his lips against the face where the tears now ran warm and salt. It was one of the immortal moments.

The picture was charming, too—a picture to wring the heart of the onlooker with envy—or sympathy, according to his nature. But there was only one Onlooker—a man of forty or thereabouts, who paused for an instant under the great gate of the castle and took in the full charm and meaning of the scene. He turned away and went back along the green path, with hell in his heart. The other two were in Paradise. The Onlooker felt like the third in Eden—the serpent, in fact. Two miles away he stopped and lit a pipe.

"It's got to be borne, I suppose," he said, "like all the rest of it. *She's* happy enough. I ought to be glad. Anyway, I can't stop it."

Perhaps he swore a little. If he did, the less precise may, perhaps, pardon him. He had loved the Girl since her early teens, and it was only yesterday's post that had brought him the appointment that one might marry on. The appointment had come through her father, for whom the Onlooker had fagged at Eton. He went back to London, hell burning briskly. Moral maxims and ethereal ideals notwithstanding, it was impossible for him to be glad that she was happy—like that.

* * * * *

The Lover who came to his love over strewn wall-flowers desired always, as has been seen, to act up to his moral ideals. So he took next day a much earlier train than was at all pleasant, and called on her father to explain his position and set forth his prospects. His coming was heralded by a letter from her. One must not quote it—it is not proper to read other people's letters, especially letters to a trusted father from a child, only and adored. Its effect may be indicated briefly. It showed the Father that the Girl's happiness had had two long years in which to learn to grow round the thought of the young man whom he now faced for the first time. Odd! For to the Father he seemed just like other young men. It seemed to him that there were so many more of the same pattern from whom she might have chosen. And many of them well off, too. However, the letter lay in the prosperous pocket-book in the breast of the Father's frock-coat, and the Lover was received as though that letter had been a charm to ensure success—a faulty, or at least a slow-working charm, however, for the Father did not take a bag of gold from his safe and say: "Take her; take this also; be happy." He only consented to a provisional engagement, took an earnest interest in the young man's affairs, and offered to make his daughter an annual allowance on her marriage. "At my death she will have more," he said, "and of course I have insured my life. You, of course, will insure yours."

"Of course I will," the Lover echoed warmly. "Does it matter what office?"

"Oh! any good office—the Influential, if you like. I'm a director, you know."

The young man made a reverent note of the name, and the interview seemed played out.

"It's a complicated nuisance," mused the Father. "It isn't even as if I knew anything of the chap. I oughtn't to have allowed the child to make these long visits to her aunt. Or I ought to have gone with her. But I never could stand my sister Fanny. Well, well," and he went back to his work with the plain, unvarnished heart-ache of the anxious father, not romantic and pretty like the lover's pangs, but as uncomfortable as tooth-ache all the same.

He had another caller that afternoon; he whom we know as the Onlooker came to thank the Father for the influence that had got him the appointment as doctor to the Influential Insurance Company.

The Father opened his heart to the Onlooker, and the Onlooker had to bear it. It was an hour full of poignant sentiments. The only definite thought that came to the Onlooker was this: "I must hold my tongue. I must hold my tongue." He held it.

Three days later he took up his new work. And the very first man who came to him for medical examination was the man in whose arms he had seen the girl he loved.

The Onlooker asked the first needful questions automatically. To himself he was saying: "The situation is dramatically good, but I don't see how to develop the action. It really is rather amusing that I—*I* should have to tap his beastly chest, and listen to his cursed lungs, and ask sympathetic questions about his idiotic infant illnesses. There's one thing: he ought to be able to remember those pretty vividly, the confounded pup!"

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The Onlooker had never done anything wronger than you have done, my good reader, and he never expected to meet a giant temptation—any more than you do. A man may go all his days and never meet Apollyon. On the other hand, Apollyon may be waiting for one round the corner of the next street. The Devil was waiting for the Onlooker in the answers to his careless questions—

"Father alive? No? What did he die of?"

For the answer was "Heart," and in it the Devil rose and showed the Onlooker the really only true and artistic way to develop the action in this situation, so dramatic in its possibilities. The illuminative flash of temptation was so sudden, so brilliant, that the Doctor Onlooker closed his soul's eyes and yielded without even the least pretence of resistance.

He took his stethoscope from the table, and he felt as though he had picked up a knife to stab the other man in the back—as, in fact, he had.

Ten minutes later the stabbed man was reeling from the Onlooker's consulting-room. Mind and soul reeled, that is, but his body was stiffer and straighter than usual. He walked with more than his ordinary firmness of gait, as a man does who is just drunk enough to know that he must try to look sober.

"He took his stethoscope from the table."

He walked down the street, certain words ringing in his ears: "Heart affected. Probably hereditary weakness. No office in the world would insure you."

And so it was all over — the dreams, the hopes, the palpitating faith in a beautiful future. His days might be long, they might be brief; but, be his life long or short, he must live it alone. He had a little fight with himself as he went down Threadneedle Street; then he hailed a hansom and went and told her father, who quite agreed with him that it was all over. The Father wondered at himself for being more sorry than glad.

Then the Lover went and told the Girl. He had told the Father first, to ensure himself against any chance of yielding to what he knew the Girl would say. She said it, of course, with her dear arms round his neck.

"I won't give you up just because you are

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ill," she said. "Why, you want me more than ever!"

"But I may die at any moment."

"So may I! And you may live to be a hundred. I'll take my chance. Oh! don't you see, too, that if there *is* only a little time, we ought to spend it together?"

"It's impossible," he said. "It's no good. I must set my teeth and bear it. And you—— I hope it won't be as hard for you as it will for me."

"But you *can't* give me up if I won't *be* given up, can you?"

His smile struck her dumb. It was more convincing than his words.

"But why?" she said presently. "Why—why—*why?*"

"Because I won't, because it's wrong. My father ought never to have married. He had no right to bring me into the world to suffer like this. It's a crime. And I'll not be a criminal—not even for you—not even for you. You'll forgive me—won't you? I didn't know—and—oh! what's the use of talking?"

Yet they talked for hours. Conventionally he should have torn himself away, unable to bear the strain of his agony. As a matter of fact, he sat by her holding her hand. It was for the last time—the last, last time. There was really a third at that interview. The Onlooker had imagination enough to see the scene between the parting lovers.

So they parted.

And now the Onlooker dared not meet her—dared not call at the house as he used to do. At last the Father pressed him. He went. He met her. And it was as though he had met the ghost of her whom he had loved. Her eyes had blue marks under them, her chin had grown more pointed, her nose sharper. There was a new line on her forehead, and her eyes had changed.

Over the wine he heard from the Father that she was pining for the Lover who had inherited heart disease.

"I suppose it was you who saw him, by the way," said he—"a tall, well-set-up young fellow, dark, not bad-looking?"

"I—I don't remember," lied the Onlooker, with the eyes of his memory on the white face of the man he had stabbed.

Now, the Lover and the Onlooker had each his own burden to bear. And the Lover's was the easier. He worked still, though there was now nothing to work for more; he worked as he had never worked in his life, because he knew that if he did not take to work, he should take to drink or worse devils, and he set his teeth and swore that her lover should not be degraded. He knew that she loved him, and there was a kind of fierce pain-pleasure—like that of scratching a sore—in the thought that she was as wretched as he was; that, divided in all else, they were yet united in their suffering. He thought it made him more miserable to know of her misery. But it didn't. He never saw her; but he dreamed of her, and sometimes the dreams got out of hand and carried him a thousand worlds from all that lay between them. Then he had to wake up. And that was bad.

But the Onlooker was no dreamer, and he saw her about three times a week. He saw how the light of life that his lying lips had blown out was not to be re-kindled by his or any man's breath. He saw her slenderness turn to thinness—the pure, healthy pallor of her rounded cheek change to a sickly white, covering a clear-cut mask of set endurance. And there was no work that could shut out that sight, no temptation of the world, the flesh or the devil to give him even the relief of a fight. He had no temptations. He had never had but the one. His soul was naked to the bitter wind of the actual; and the days went by. And every day he knew more and more surely that he had lied and thrown away his soul, and that the wages of sin were death, and no other thing whatever. And gradually, little by little, the whole worth of life grew to lie in the faint, far chance of his being able to undo the one triumphantly impulsive and unreasoning action of his life.

But there are some acts that there is no undoing. And the hell that had burned in his heart so fiercely when he had seen her in the other man's arms, burned now with new, bright lights and infernal, flickering flame-tongues.

And at last, out of hell, the Onlooker reached out his hands and caught at prayer. He caught at it as a drowning man catches at a white gleam in the black of the surging sea about him; it may be a painted spar, it may be empty foam. The Onlooker prayed.

And that very evening he ran up against the Lover at the Temple Station, and he got into the same carriage with him.

He said: "Excuse me. You don't remember me?"

"I'm not likely to have forgotten you," said the Lover.

"I fear my verdict was a great blow. You

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"'I'll not be a criminal—not even for you!'"

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"'He—he—asked me to marry him three weeks ago.'

look very worried, very ill. News like that is a great shock."

"It *is* a little unsettling," said the Lover.

"Are you still going on with your usual work?"

"Yes."

"Speaking professionally, I think you are wrong. You lessen your chances of life. Why don't you try a complete change?"

"Because, if you *must* know, my chances of life have ceased to interest me."

The Lover was short with the Onlooker, but he persisted.

"Well, if one isn't interested in one's life, one may be interested in one's death, or the manner of it. In your place, I should enlist. It's better to die of a bullet in South Africa than of fright in London."

That roused the Lover, as it was meant to do.

"I don't really know what business it is of yours, sir," he said; "but it's your business to know that they wouldn't pass a man with a heart like mine."

"I don't know. They're not so particular just now. They want men. I should try it if I were you. If you don't have a complete change, you'll go all to pieces. That's all."

The Onlooker got out at the next station. Short of owning to his own lie, he had done what he could to ensure its being found out for the lie it was—or, at least, for a mistake. And when he had done what he could, he saw that the Lover might not find it out—might be passed for the Army—might go to the front—might be killed—and then . . . . "Well, I've done my best, anyhow," he said to himself. And himself answered him: "Liar, you have *not* done your best. You will have to eat your lie. Yes, though it will smash your life and ruin you socially and professionally. You will have to tell him you lied—and to tell him why; worse, you will have to tell her. You will never let him go to South Africa without telling the truth—you'll call on her on Sunday and tell her the whole ugly thing—and you know it."

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"Well, you know best, I suppose," he said to himself.

* * * * *

"But are you perfectly certain?"

"Pairfectly! I tell you, man, ye're's sound's a bell, and a fine fathom of a young man at that, too. Sairtain? Losh, man! ye can call in the whole College of Physeecians in consultation, an' I'll wager me professional reputation they'll endorse me opeenion. Your hairt's as sound's a roach. Yon man must ha' been asleep when ye consulted him. Ye'll mak' a fine soldier, me lad."

"I think not," said the Lover, and he went out from the presence. This time he reeled like a man too drunk to care how drunk he looks.

He drove in cabs from Harley Street to Wimpole Street, and from Wimpole Street to Brooke Street; and he saw Sir William This and Sir Henry That, and Mr. The-other-thing, the great heart specialists.

And then he went home and dressed himself in his most beautiful frock-coat and his softest white silk tie, and put a gardenia in his button-hole—and went to see the Girl.

"Looks like as if he was going to a wedding," said his landlady.

When he had told the Girl everything, and when she was able to do anything but laugh and cry and cling to him with thin hands, she said: "Dear, I do so hate to think badly of anyone. But do you really think that man *was* mistaken? He's very, very clever."

"My child, Sir Henry, and Sir William, and Mr.——"

"Ah! I don't mean *that*. I *know* you're all right. Thank God! Oh, thank God! I mean, don't you think *he* may have lied to you to prevent your . . . marrying me?"

"But why should he?"

"He—he—asked me to marry him three weeks ago. He's a very old friend of ours. I do hate to be suspicious—but . . . it is odd. And then his trying to get you to South Africa. I'm certain he wanted you out of the way. He wanted you to get killed. Oh! how can people be so cruel?"

"I believe you're right," said the Lover thoughtfully. "I couldn't have believed that a man could be base like that, through and through. But I suppose some people *are* like that—without a gleam of feeling or remorse or pity."

"You ought to expose him."

"Not I—we'll just cut him. That's all I'll trouble to do. I've got *you*—I've got you in spite of him. I can't waste my time in hunting down vermin."

THE NIGHT RIDER.

By FULLERTON L. WALDO.

GIVE me the night and the stars and a horse to ride,
And let me ride out into the night, away,
Away from home till the yellow familiar lights
Checker the blackness behind, and blackness alone is before,
And I ride out into the night, out into the night!

Afar and away, like a ship in the midst of the sea . . .
The stars are over the face of the sky-like spray;
And one star flames and falls and is utterly gone,
While the wind wings by with a winging of souls that pass;
And I ride out into the night, out into the night!

O great, good horse! O wide, star-cresseted night!
O fields! O sky! O dim and glamorous woods!
O multitudinous throb and resurgence and thrill
Of the horse and the night and the fields and the sky and the woods! . . .
And I ride out into the night, out into the night!

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THE STUDY OF SHAKESPEARE

IN SMALL COMMUNITIES.

By SIR HENRY IRVING.*

THE practice of reading aloud in small or moderate-sized gatherings is in every way to be commended. It is good for the individual, good for the members of the group, good for the locality, good for the nation. Good is a relative term, and there are degrees of goodness and utility; therefore no one must exaggerate into levity the seriousness of a subject possibly at first not of prime importance. For many reasons it is an excellent thing to have some sort of standard of perfection, and Shakespeare's greatness allows of the universal acceptance of his works as a criterion of literary excellence. Not only do the breadth and variety of his thought and his searching analysis of human motives give value to the study of his work, but the beauty of his style, the wide extent of his vocabulary, and the precision of the expression of his thoughts, all combine to place him in a conspicuous place of literary masterdom.

THE "DAVENANT" BUST OF SHAKESPEARE.

The effect of such study, scattered over every part of a great nation, in every town and hamlet, in every school and class-room, must be widespread and effective. And if to these methods of organised study are added the voluntary efforts of those earnest students who seek a higher perfection of style and diction and thought, an added glory to the language must be the result. Shakespeare's work preserved in a single manuscript would still be work of equal excellence—

> The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,
> Though to itself it only live and die.

as he himself wrote—but its effect on language, written and spoken alike, would be very different.

Shakespeare's work, coming as it did and when it did, as an accepted standard of literary excellence, helped to crystallise the English language into its permanent form; and its universal study for the exercise of both speech and writing must ever keep it pure, always remembering that it is manifestly an eclectic language, capable of having grafted on its strong stem all necessary words from other sources. The life of a language which is eternally spreading over new lands, and under new conditions, is apt to change its nature from the very rapidity of its enlargement. Commerce and art, and science and war, and the many enlarging possibilities and needs of a growing civilisation, all play their part in the development of a language. In such a whirling chaos, therefore, it is vitally necessary, in order that the integrity of the language be preserved, that there be some standard which not only may be referred to for the sake of extreme exactness, but which may be used in the common practice of life.

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"MALVOLIO BEFORE THE COUNTESS OLIVIA." BY H. RAMBERG.

"KING LEAR AND THE DEAD CORDELIA." BY JAMES BARRY, R.A.

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"OPHELIA." FROM THE PICTURE IN THE TATE GALLERY BY THE LATE SIR JOHN E. MILLAIS, BART., R.A.

By permission of Messrs. Henry Graves and Co., Pall Mall, S.W.

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We take care that our weights and measures are exact. Why, then, should we not be even still more careful of that which is indeed our birthright, and aim always at the preservation of the excellency of our common tongue?

In France there is an Academy, founded by Richelieu, whose labour is to complete and preserve the language. Its work is so earnest, but so extremely slow, that two centuries have not sufficed to complete the task. The Academy leaves, however, to another institution, one founded by the actor Molière, the perpetuation of spoken excellence. Now in the English-speaking countries we have not yet any subsidy for a theatre such as that which in France and Germany and Austria makes possible the presentation of works of merit with a frequency and in a manner difficult to sustain by any private enterprise. It is, therefore, necessary that the academic result be achieved by other means; and fortunate it is that we have such a recognised standard of excellence to look to as the works of Shakespeare. Indeed, for literary purposes, two books go almost together. If we dissociate from the Bible all its sacred aspect, and regard only its wisdom and the beauty of the language in which its ideas are conveyed, we shall find much in common.

SIR HENRY IRVING AS "HAMLET."
FROM THE PICTURE BY EDWIN LONG, R.A.
Reproduced from the engraving published by Messrs. Goupil and Co.

The great wave of thought and effort which followed the freeing of the Bible and the bringing of its words to the every-day use of the mass of the people was that which bore up the writers of the sixteenth century. Up to Elizabeth's time the higher teaching was done in Latin, which was the language of the Church. But Biblical study caught the English language just at that stage of its development where it could be crystallised and made a permanent thing. That great group of writers, chiefly dramatists, of which Shakespeare was the head and front, made the good work solid by adding its literary

A PAINTING OF "THE DEATH OF CLEOPATRA," BY J. LUNA, IN THE GALLERY OF MODERN ART, MADRID.

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and imaginative aspects, by enlarging its vocabulary, and by familiarising the public of the time, in great centres, with the recognised forms of accent and speech. The language of Chaucer, with its long-drawn vowels and consonants, and its cumbrous utterance, still lingered in the rural places.

Practically the English language in its beauty and permanence dates from the time of Shakespeare. New conditions of monarchy, of Court life, of foreign trade, of scientific advance, of distant wars, added words but did not change radically anything in the common speech. British Kings reared in France, a King imported from Holland, a Hanoverian succession—the concomitant pressures of all these—did not change structure or

THE "CHANDOS" PORTRAIT OF SHAKESPEARE.

THE GUILD CHAPEL, STRATFORD-ON-AVON, VIEWED FROM THE GARDEN OF NEW PLACE, THE HOUSE SHAKESPEARE BOUGHT FOR HIS ADVANCING YEARS.
The remains of the foundations of the house are enclosed in frames.

form or delivery. Further, the growth of a great nation in spreading through the Western wilds and absorbing in countless numbers all the nationalities of the Old World has made but little change. French and Germans, Danes, Norwegians, Swedes, Poles, Russians, Italians, Hungarians have passed across the Atlantic in vast numbers: but, somehow, their individualities of speech have become lost or merged in the great English tongue which spreads and spreads with never-ending activity throughout the habitable globe.

There is another phase of the matter, too, which must be always borne in mind. The finer meanings of words and phrases which have become sanctified through some

THE GARDEN FRONTAGE OF SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHPLACE, STRATFORD-ON-AVON.
Three photographs by Catharine Weed Ward.

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THE WRECK OFF THE ENCHANTED ISLAND IN "THE TEMPEST." BY GEORGE ROMNEY.

From the "Boydell" Shakespeare, by permission of Messrs. Henry Graves and Co., Pall Mall, S.W.

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centuries of use should not be allowed to run any chance of being lost. The method of phonetic spelling, adopted so often of late years, is apt to obliterate the footmarks of higher learning. Every word of importance has, or at least may have, a special meaning in its original form; the root words which spring from it can only have their full significance when there is an understanding of the original word, and a knowledge that the root words have, beyond their immediate and local meaning, reference to the older and simple idea to be conveyed. In phonetic spelling this meaning ceases for those who know only the present use, and the richness of philological worth does not for them exist. In philological culture the eye has something to teach as well as the ear; if it were only for the sake of furthering the uniformity of spelling, the study of an accepted standard of literary work all over the country could not and cannot fail to be in some degree good.

"Practice makes perfect." Anyone who without experience undertakes to read aloud before others will understand perhaps for the first time how a branch of education which would almost seem of primary importance may be utterly neglected. It is not easy to be satisfied with the pronunciation of words; it is difficult to realise to the full the fine workings of perfected thought. Punctuation shows its true importance with regard to the conveyance of meaning in live language: the spoken as against the written. In the possible advantages of pause and haste, in the values of rapidity and slowness of utterance in their proper places, the first great lesson of histrionic force is learned. Later come the potentialities of accent and inflection, the suggestions of passion, of pathos, of growing concern. Finally, with a larger consciousness of power and a cessation of the haunting fears of ridicule and failure, one can make a larger and more determined effort in the use of those powers of impersonation which are inherent in our nature, which are common to all, and in the use of which the most perfect and convincing actor is only an expert perhaps better equipped by habitual effort and with some larger natural powers. The late Henry Ward Beecher's reading, to my mind, realised to the full the intense humanity of parts of the New Testament.

"THE INFANT SHAKESPEARE ATTENDED BY NATURE AND THE PASSIONS." BY GEORGE ROMNEY.
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No community can be too small for the practice of reading in public. If there be only two persons, each may, in turn, learn something from the successes or failures of the other; and in proportion as the opportunities increase for the exercise of mutual judgment, so far is the possibility of added excellence extended. The wings of the soul have to be tried and exercised as well as the wings of the bird before full flight can be attained.

THE LATIN SCHOOLROOM IN THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL, STRATFORD-ON-AVON, WHERE SHAKESPEARE IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE LEARNED HIS "SMALL LATIN AND LESS GREEK."

The boy's figure in the corner occupies the spot of the poet's traditional desk.

No one need be diffident at the beginning; there is nothing really difficult. There is no arduous labour; there is no possibility of absolute failure where there is honest, careful

Two photographs by [*Catharine Weed Ward.*

THE HEADQUARTERS OF SHAKESPEARIAN STUDY AND RESEARCH IN ENGLAND: THE LIBRARIAN'S ROOM AT THE MEMORIAL LIBRARY, STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

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effort. Any form or subject of reading, worthy in itself, can be of use for the study of elocution. It is, however, possible to get together groups of persons interested in some common theme, when the mere getting them together without such an agglomerative cause is lacking; and Shakespeare has been, is, and ever will be a name to conjure with. Experience has proved that in thousands of instances men and women may be brought together in pleasant groups or communities for the study of Shakespeare's work. A play read weekly or monthly, with the various characters allotted beforehand, has been a source of much and continuous pleasure, productive of thought and study, ameliorative of defective power of utterance, a winnower of the chaff of harsh accent or ultra-colloquial mannerism. In this general improvement the mutual understanding of individuals has always a part, and many a pleasant and enduring friendship, or something closer, follows, as a natural corollary of the cultivation of an intellectual taste held in common. Beyond this an incalculable benefit would be conferred on the people—if they could be induced to listen to or to read Shakespeare and other imaginative works. An eminent bishop was saying the other day that the greatest difficulty the Church had to contend with was the dull, torpid indifference of villagers, who almost refused to be interested in any works of imagination.

It will be quite a sufficient introduction of quickening interests for any little group of persons bent on personal improvement to form a Shakespeare club; but believe me, the ultimate consequences of such effort lie far outside themselves and their gatherings. The taste of the nation will benefit, the language will become more exact without losing its elasticity, and the priceless heritage of our English tongue will be preserved to the world in its purity.

BEATRICE.

PORTIA.

MISS ELLEN TERRY IN TWO OF HER FINEST SHAKESPEARIAN IMPERSONATIONS.

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THE VANISHING OF MAJOR VAUGHAN.

By Weatherby Chesney.*

"THERE was another case," said the K.C., "in which I was instructed by Taylor, that would have turned out differently if I had stuck to the information which was contained within the four corners of my brief. I mean the trouble about Major Vaughan, of Kirk Diton, and the £500,000. Hullo—my turn! Beg your pardon, Grey."

He took up his cue and made a five shot, cleverly leaving white in position for the spot stroke. After which he proceeded to mark up the twenty-seven requisite to win entirely off the red ball, and put down his cue, leaving the spot break unfinished.

"For an amateur," said Grey, "you're absolutely the best player I know, when you're in anything like form, Wolaston."

"A man must do something outside his own narrow little trade," replied the lawyer, "and billiards are about my only hobby. I've played above my usual level to-night, though. That shows I've had nothing special to worry me of late. My cue hand is an accurate barometer as to the state of my head. When one's shaky, it is an absolute certainty that the other is working at high pressure."

There was a short silence whilst the pair of them came up into the wide chimney-corner and got settled in the big chairs, and then Grey said: "Tell me about the Vaughan row. I was up-country in India at the time, and only heard vague outlines."

"They looked, indeed, remarkably ugly," replied Wolaston; "and when I first scanned through my brief, I didn't see that we'd a leg to stand on. I met Taylor, the solicitor, you know, out at dinner that night, and getting him confidentially for a minute after the ladies had gone, told him as much.

"'I'm quite of your opinion,' said he. 'We must do the best we can; but I'm afraid it's a bad job, however we look at it. As the matter stands to the public view, Major Vaughan has bolted with at least half-a-million in negotiable securities, and he's gone Heaven alone knows where. The news leaks out, and there's a run on the bank at Kirk Diton, of which his son Wilfred is manager. The run's too quick, and the bank can't stand it; is forced to close doors; puts itself into liquidation and shows up badly. Wilfred Vaughan's own private account was considerably on the wrong side; Major Vaughan seemed somehow responsible for half-a-million sovereigns.

"'On the strength of this, warrants were issued for the pair of them, but only the son surrendered. Major Vaughan has vanished as completely as if the earth had swallowed him. Wilfred is again at large under very heavy bail, and is, as you know, awaiting trial.'

"'Will he abscond, do you think?'

"'No. His bondsmen are neither of them well off, and have strained every sinew to help him. If he made a bolt of it, the result would be ruin to them, and he's too honourable a man to bring about that. By the way, he's engaged.'

"'Oh?'

"'Yes, to a Miss Dane.'

"'Dane?'

"'Yes. A Miss Hermione Dane. I remember the Christian name, because it is a rather uncommon one.'

"'By Jove! Taylor, this is news for me with a vengeance. D'you know, she's my cousin? This can't have been going on long, or I must have heard of it before.'

"'No; they got engaged only a week ago.'

"'Then he must be a tolerably pernicious sort of blackguard to let a girl tie herself to him with this trouble hanging overhead.'

"I don't think so quite, Wolaston. He had been paying her attention for a long time before, and they both knew one another's feelings. As a matter of fact, she proposed to him and forced him to accept her. Indeed, she told me as much, and I thought it was intensely plucky of her.'

"'Intensely idiotic. She isn't your cousin. However, the mischief's done now, and what we've to do is to get young Vaughan out of the scrape as far as ever we can. I suppose our line will be to heap all blame on to the shoulders of the absent father?'

"'I've suggested that, Wolaston, but Wilfred Vaughan won't hear about it. He

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insists upon it that his father always has been and still remains the most honourable man in England.'

"'That's filial affection, but I'm afraid it's more creditable that credible. Wherefore did the man bolt and leave his son to bear the brunt of the blame? No, Taylor, that dog won't fight. In a few years' time we shall hear of Major Vaughan as being a successful speculator in Argentina breweries. He's feathered his nest nicely, to the tune of half-a-million sterling English, and I think, by consequence, he shouldn't object to bearing a little more discredit if we can manage to heap it on to his shoulders.'

"'I don't know,' said Taylor, shaking his head doubtfully. 'Wilfred seems very obstinate in refusing to have his own name cleared at the expense of his father's. But we must talk about this again afterwards. We've got to join the ladies now.'

"We did talk about it afterwards, the solicitor and I, and that no later than the afternoon of the very next day. It came about in this wise. In the morning my fair cousin, whose name we had had up the night before, called at my chambers and bluntly informed me that her name was Hermione Dane no longer.

"'It is now,' said she, 'Hermione Vaughan.'

"I mentioned without preamble that I didn't think it a change for the better.

"She begged to disagree with me entirely and sat in my best arm-chair. 'I have shown to everybody that I am convinced of Wilfred's innocence,' said she, 'and I want you to prove it to them conclusively. I'm going to stick to him.'

"I had it on the tip of my tongue to say that there were no provisions made for double housekeeping in His Majesty's retreat at Dartmoor, but on second thoughts forbore. It might have been true, but all the same, it would have been gratuitous cruelty. *Ex post facto* I-told-you-so's are neither popular nor instructive; and if this quixotic fool of a girl was married to the fellow, there was nothing to be done but make the best of it.

"So I said: 'Well, Hermione, if you don't want your husband to do seven years in the quarries, you must help me throw all the blame on your father-in-law. Those are the two alternatives.'

"'And I accept neither of them,' she returned, gazing at me with bright eyes.

"I shrugged my shoulders. 'Perhaps you'll suggest another line of defence? I confess I fail to see one.'

"'If you want the thing cleared up, find Major Vaughan.'

"'Precisely,' I said, with some dryness. 'A good many other people would like to find him, too. The only drawback is, no one who can tell seems to know where he has got to. But if your precious—I mean, if your husband is willing to open his lips, we might move forward.'

"'Wilfred knows no more of his father's whereabouts than you do.'

"'So,' I remarked, with increasing dryness, 'I've heard that he has said before.'

"'And,' she went on hotly, 'I pledge Wilfred's word with my own. Can't you thrust away your hateful suspicions for the time and join me in knowing him to be innocent?'

"'And supposing I did that,' I rejoined tartly, 'what earthly good would it do? Can you suggest a scheme of defence?'

"'I can suggest this. Find Major Vaughan, then he will explain everything. Now, don't shrug those hopeless shoulders of yours. You've done harder things before, and you must do this for my sake. If Wilfred is ruined, his wife is ruined, too.'

"'So that's why you married him? To spur me on, eh? Well, women are fools. But as you are in the mess, I'll do my best to help the pair of you out. I'll go and see Taylor now, and probably shall bring him down to Kirk Diton for the night. See that we have beds.'

"'I will, and I'll have a fire in the billiard-room, for you to rest there after you've done your work.'"

The barrister broke off and chose a fresh cigar.

"Now, Grey," he went on, "you'll kindly observe that I hadn't a blessed thing to go upon over and above what I had before; but the honour of a girl of my own kin was at stake, and that made me determined to keep Wilfred Vaughan's heels out of the shackles if it could be managed. So I squared Taylor to let me work on my own hook and trained down to Kirk Diton.

"I didn't tell Wilfred Vaughan what I thought of him—to wit, that he was a dirty scoundrel for marrying Hermione, however much in her quixotism she had pressed him; because, as I have said, the thing was done, and there was nothing left but to make the best of it. But I did give him the biggest emetic of cross-questioning he'd ever had in his life; and I give him credit, he answered straightforwardly like a man. When one got to know him, he seemed really a very decent young fellow; and there was no mis-

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"'There's a run on the bank.'"

take about it, if things turned out right, Kirk Diton was a thundering fine property, and the match would be a distinctly good one for Hermione.

"About half way through my examination I asked him if he thought his father had committed suicide.

"'Such a thing has never occurred to me,' he said.

"'Then you think he has not?'

"'I am absolutely certain of it.'

"'But even supposing he found himself in great straits?'

"'Even supposing that, Mr. Wolaston, he would not do it. My father was a quietly religious man, and held the strongest views on the subject. "Suicide," I have heard him say, "stamps a man as an ineffable

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coward in this life, and damns him to all eternity through the next." He had no half views upon the subject.'

"'Then, presuming him not to have taken his life, how do you account for his disappearance? He must know he is, to say the least of it, wanted urgently. I'm afraid you will have to admit that my view is correct. Major Vaughan has, in vulgar parlance, absconded, and is either lying low near at hand until the storm has blown over, or else is making good his retreat to some State with which Great Britain has no extradition treaty.'

"'As I have repeated to you ten times already, Mr. Wolaston, I will not admit that last theory for one minute. If you had known my father as well as I, you would understand that he was the last man in the world to do such a thing. He had what are, perhaps, old-fashioned views, but he used to love his honour above his life. He would have died cheerfully sooner than do anything dishonest. I know this sounds much what the good young man of the piece says in cheap melodramas; but I can't help that; in my father's case it is naked truth.'

"'But,' I persisted, 'you must have some ideas about his disappearance. I am given to understand that he took a great quantity of the bank securities with him.'

"'About half-a-million. My father, as you know, owns the bank, though it does its business under a name other than his. Money has been very bad of late, and we have had a lot of ours locked up doing practically nothing. When customers did business with us, we were often suffering an actual loss on it, let alone the bank's working expenses. But things began to take a turn. We heard of a sound investment and determined to put half-a-million into it in one lump. My father brought the bonds up here during the afternoon and stowed them in his private safe. In the morning he was going to take them up to the City.'

"'In the morning he and the bonds had both vanished?'

"'Yes.'

"'Was your own account at the bank overdrawn at that date?'

"'No. I draw only a nominal salary. My father was in the habit of paying everything for me, and I seldom had need of money. When he had gone, I overdrew to save the credit of the bank. This place costs much to keep up, and if I had let it go down, people would have grown suspicious and withdrawn their deposits. A quick run I knew we could not meet. I staved this off for some time; but at last my father's absence got noised about, and the run came. You know the rest. So that all I got by overdrawing my own account was a temporary respite.'

"'Well and good. You've explained that satisfactorily. But now to return to the main point. Did your father vanish like a mouthful of smoke? Did he leave no trace behind him?'

"'We went upstairs together that night, Mr. Wolaston, and I saw him enter his bedroom, which is next to mine. Later I heard him get into bed.'

"'Half a minute. How did you hear that?'

"'My father is a heavy man, and his bed has an old-fashioned spring mattress. It invariably squeaks when first he gets on to it.'

"'I see. Go on.'

"'Next morning he was gone. The front door was open, and so was the door of the safe.'

"'The door of the safe? Was it empty, then?'

"'No; only the bundle of securities for the City was gone. The safe contained abundance of other papers, and these were unmeddled with. On his writing-table, held there by a letter-weight, was a note addressed to me. Here it is: "Dear W.—Having all these valuable bonds in the house worries me. I can't sleep. I shall walk to the station and run up by the early mail. Probably I shall breakfast at St. Pancras, but certainly I shall hand in the money so soon as ever the bank opens.—Yours affectionately, L. V." It was all right about his going up to town by the morning mail. The stationmaster booked him first class as usual. But I'm afraid he changed his mind about breakfast, because they knew nothing about him at the Midland Hotel when I inquired there. And he is well known at the hotel. Any of the servants would have remembered him if he had been in.'

"I was conscious all this time of Hermione watching me very narrowly. At this moment she cut in: 'Your face is brightening up. You've got your idea at last.'

"'I've got an idea, but it's a very gauzy one so far. Major Vaughan was a methodical man?'

"'Most methodical,' replied his son. 'As regards his business affairs, he was accuracy personified.'

"'Then did it never strike you as odd that he should have left open not only the outer

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"Wilfred Vaughan found his father on Deal beach, where he was known as an amiable maniac."

door of the house, but the safe door as well? It appears to me as hardly a business-like proceeding.'

"'That has worried me more than a little, Mr. Wolaston. I never knew my father to do such a thing before. Hurry could be no excuse for it. The safe had a number-combination lock, and a slam of the door and a twirl of the handle made it secure against all the burglars in creation. But——'

"'But he neglected that simple ceremony. Precisely. Now tell me what was your father's health when you saw him last?'

"The answer was to me a distinct disappointment. I thought I had seen a clear hypothesis. Young Vaughan upset it by saying unhesitatingly, 'Excellent.'

"I puckered my brow in thought for a good ten minutes and then got hold of another idea. 'You have no objection, I suppose, to showing me your father's bedroom?'

"'None whatever,' said Wilfred Vaughan, and led the way upstairs. The room was large and airy. The first thing I did was very nearly to slip on to my back.

"'Ah! take care,' said young Vaughan, putting out a hand. 'That polished parquet floor was a fad of my father's.'

"'It strikes me as being a very dangerous fad. These Turkish mats slip about like iron on ice. So that's the bed with the creaky spring, and—why is there a broken chair there?'

"'It was found broken the morning after my father went. And I have had everything left untouched since.'

"'Any idea how it got smashed?'

"'None.'

"'Heard no noise of breakage during the night?'

"'No.'

"'And it wasn't broken the night before?'

"'No, or I should have heard of it through the servants.'

"'Good. Now send for the maid who did up this room the next morning.'

"She came, and I put a question to her. 'How was this mat beside the bed on

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the morning after Major Vaughan went away?'

"'It was upset, sir.'

"'How do you mean?'

"'Crumpled, sir, and pushed away from the chair in a sort of heap like this.'

"'Thanks,' said I, 'that will do,' and the maid went away, and I went on my knees beside the chair. There was a faint bruise on the wood, and from the velvet seat just above it I picked up a couple of hairs attached to a shrivelled film of skin.

"'Your father had grey hair, Mr. Vaughan?'

"'Yes.'

"'Then look at those and look at this. I will tell you now what has happened. He got out of bed during the night and stepped on the rug, which slipped away from his feet owing to this confounded parquet. Falling, his head knocked against the edge of the chair. Dazed for the minute, he pulled himself together and fancied he was none the worse for the accident. But he was. Some portion of his brain was injured, which completely altered his sanity. On some points he was absolutely his own self; on others he was entirely a different creature. It was this new moiety of his being which forced his next action. He dressed and went downstairs. His old self remembered the combination of the lock, his new being took the securities and forgot to refasten the door. His old self carried him to the station and got his ticket; and then I much fear that the new man in him took charge for good.'

"'I'm afraid what you say is plausible,' said the young man, with a sigh, 'but it does not go far to ease my suspense.'

"'Of course not. But we must work little by little. The next thing is to make out where he has gone to. In these sort of matters it is the last impression which is usually taken up for the new use. Did your father read much?'

"'He invariably dipped into a book for an hour or so after getting into bed. Here is what he was reading, with the page turned down.'

"Wilfred Vaughan handed me an old copy of a sea book which was marked at a chapter on 'Hovellers.' Now, hovelling as an occupation is almost obsolete, but in the old days, when sailing ships anchored in the Downs, the hovellers were a race of men residing for the most part at Deal, who went off to them as required in boats called galleys, and took them anchors, or cables, or victuals, or whatever they required. Conning through the article, I saw the town of Deal and the men of that place mentioned several times, and told Wilfred Vaughan of what I had seen.

"'I will be down there by to-morrow morning,' he said.

"'Of course,' said I, 'this is of necessity an outside shot of mine——'

"'I don't think so, Mr. Wolaston,' he cut in. 'I have followed your logic all through, and I agree with every word of it.'

"And in short, Grey — I see you are yawning — it did prove that I was right on the spot. Wilfred Vaughan found his father on Deal beach, where he was known as an amiable maniac who had apparently cropped up from nowhere. He was in no particular distress; was living comfortably in quiet lodgings; and, most important of all, had the missing half-million pounds' worth of bonds safely, if casually, stowed away in an old portmanteau.

"The money set everything to a great extent straight, and when matters were explained, the case collapsed without coming into court. Of course, the Vaughans were badly nipped over the transaction, but the bank opened again, and confidence in it was gradually restored, so that to-day, as you know, they are doing a romping business.

"As to the old Major, the doctors did much for him and restored him his wits in their entirety. But his constitution was a good deal shaken and he was never able to go to business again. Still, what can a man expect? Personally, I think they all got jolly well out of it."

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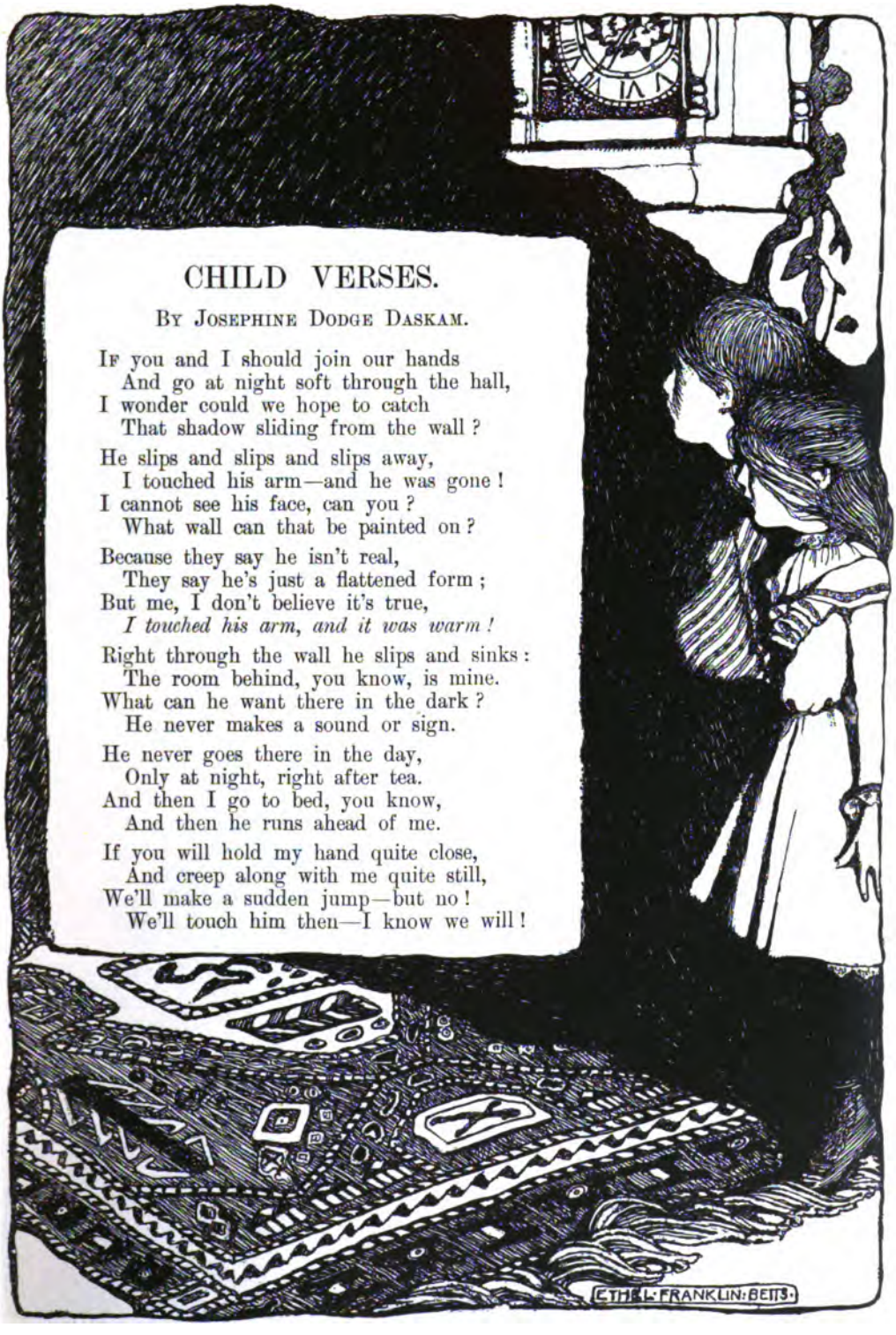

CHILD VERSES.

By Josephine Dodge Daskam.

If you and I should join our hands
And go at night soft through the hall,
I wonder could we hope to catch
That shadow sliding from the wall?

He slips and slips and slips away,
I touched his arm—and he was gone!
I cannot see his face, can you?
What wall can that be painted on?

Because they say he isn't real,
They say he's just a flattened form;
But me, I don't believe it's true,
I touched his arm, and it was warm!

Right through the wall he slips and sinks:
The room behind, you know, is mine.
What can he want there in the dark?
He never makes a sound or sign.

He never goes there in the day,
Only at night, right after tea.
And then I go to bed, you know,
And then he runs ahead of me.

If you will hold my hand quite close,
And creep along with me quite still,
We'll make a sudden jump—but no!
We'll touch him then—I know we will!

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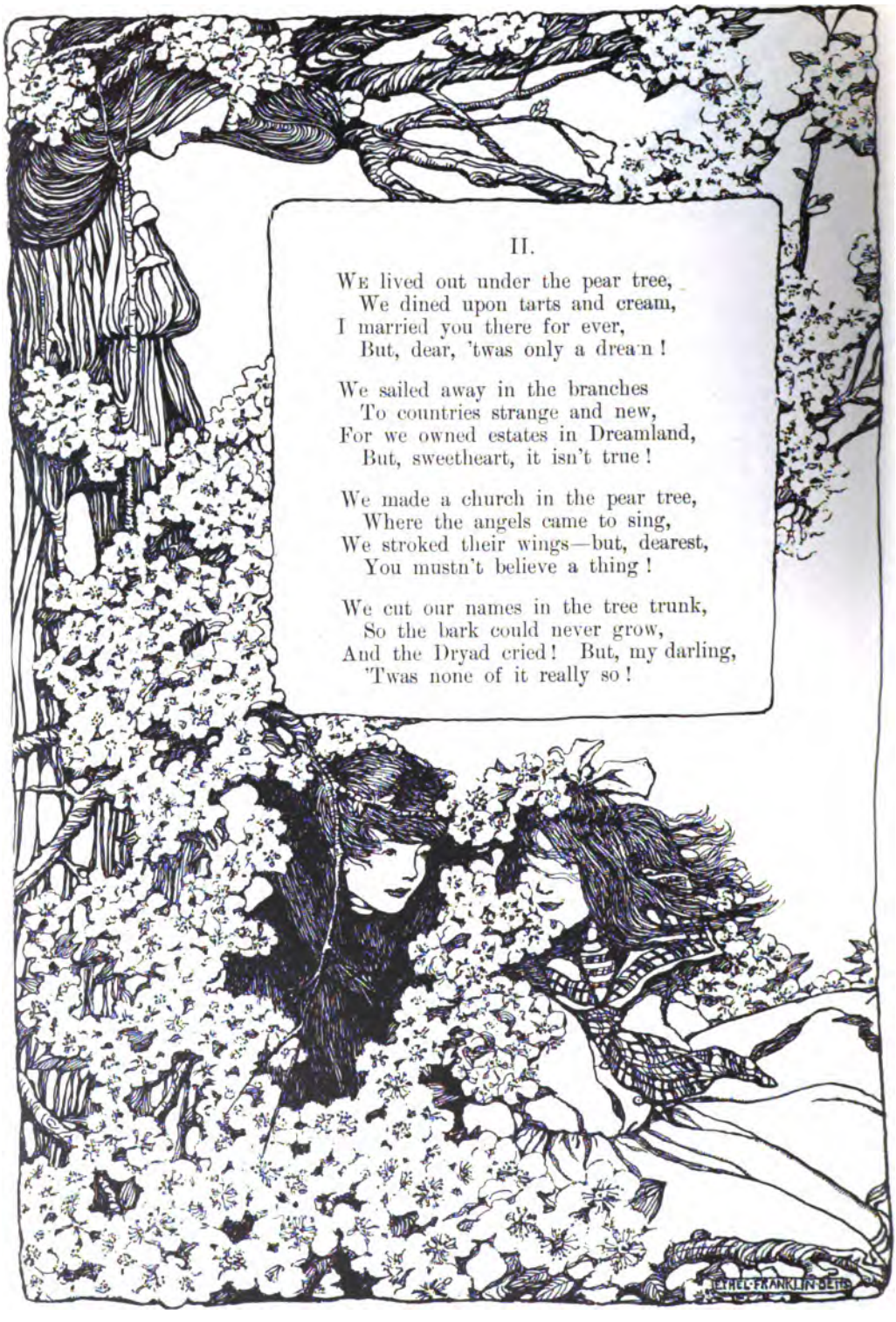

II.

We lived out under the pear tree,
We dined upon tarts and cream,
I married you there for ever,
But, dear, 'twas only a dream!

We sailed away in the branches
To countries strange and new,
For we owned estates in Dreamland,
But, sweetheart, it isn't true!

We made a church in the pear tree,
Where the angels came to sing,
We stroked their wings—but, dearest,
You mustn't believe a thing!

We cut our names in the tree trunk,
So the bark could never grow,
And the Dryad cried! But, my darling,
'Twas none of it really so!

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III.

Behind the currant bushes, when the night was coming on,
There was such a funny whisper—do you know?
It made us shiver-shiver, and it made our hearts beat quick,
And we knew it wasn't any good to carry out a stick,
But we did it just the same, or else you never would have gone—
Do you know?

Beyond the old syringa, when the stars were peeping out,
There was such a funny shadow—do you know?
And over in the flower-bed you had left your father's spade,
And you had to go and get it, and you said you weren't afraid,
But you told me afterward about the creeping Indian-scout
Do you know?

Beneath the kitchen window, when the moon was climbing high,
There was such a funny coldness—do you know?
No matter if 'twas summer, it was cool just like a well,
And the reason was because a ghost—but when you tried to tell
I put my fingers in my ears, and how I used to cry!
Do you know?

ETHEL FRANKLIN BETTS.
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IV.

How can I play any longer with my doll?
You know she has lost her head.
And Mary's the one that always fixed her for me—
And Mary, you say, is dead.

Why do I leave the sand-heap all alone?
Because it has dried and spread.
And Mary's the one that always brought the water—
And Mary, you say, is dead.

More on the beach? Well, I think I know that, too!
And *you* are the one that said
That Mary and I should sleep in a room together—
And now you say Mary's dead.

No, I don't like the hotel—I'd be alone;
I'd cry in that great big bed:
And Mary and I played tent in the morning early—
And now Mary can't—she's dead.

Happier? no, not a bit! not a single bit!
Then why are your eyes so red?
And Mary's the one that never liked angel-stories—
And Mary's the one that's dead.

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THE TRAIL OF THE DEAD:

THE STRANGE EXPERIENCE OF DR. ROBERT HARLAND.

By B. FLETCHER ROBINSON and J. MALCOLM FRASER.*

I.—THE HAIRY CATERPILLAR.

IT is with no intention of delighting the curious that I put my pen to paper. Only at the urgent desire of many members of my own profession have I undertaken a task necessarily disagreeable, and do now recall the details of a case which I take to be without parallel in the records of criminology. In the mental state of the afflicted being there was, indeed, little that was abnormal. Manias that are similar to his fill our asylums. But that laborious studies in the byways of science, rather than in her more frequented paths, had placed at the will of his disordered brain weapons of a deadly potency, transformed a personal misfortune into a great and urgent public danger.

I spent four years at Cambridge, where, though my degree was a high one, I found too many distractions to make such progress as I could have wished in my profession. Yet my interest in medicine grew steadily, and on leaving the University I determined, having both the means and the time at my disposal, to seek out a spot where I could throw myself into my work without the interruptions of old friends and old associations. The high reputation of Heidelberg attracted me, and hither I migrated.

Sufficient for myself. The man who was to be associated with me in my strange quest I will describe with equal brevity. My cousin, Sir Henry Graden, Kt., M.D., F.R.S., F.R.G.S., was a man of remarkable personality—a surgeon of brilliant gifts that had made for him a European reputation, yet an eccentric—or so the world held him—who lacked the steady application necessary for complete success. He would throw himself into the solution of a problem, or the prosecution of a new experiment, with the utmost zeal; yet on achieving the desired result he would shake off the atmosphere of the hospital and laboratory and start on some wild-goose chase that might include the ascent of an unclimbable peak, the capture of a rare species of wild animal, or the study of a little-known tribe of savages. In person he was of great stature, and heavily, almost clumsily, built, with a rugged, weather-beaten face, keen yet kindly grey eyes, and brown hair, somewhat grizzled about the temples. In age he was well past the forties. In dress and deportment he might pardonably have been mistaken for a prosperous Yorkshire grazier. Indeed, he was wont to complain that he acted as a magnet to all the tricksters of London; though, from the shrewd smile with which he accompanied his protests, it was easy to see that he thoroughly enjoyed the diversion of turning the tables on his discreditable opponents.

It was towards the end of my second year at Heidelberg. An autumn sun had sunk to rest in a golden haze over the wooded hills, and the night, luminous under a harvest moon, lay upon the old town. I was sitting at my table, on which a shaded lamp threw its yellow circle, arranging the notes of the lectures I had that day attended, when there came a knock at the door behind me. I cried a sulky invitation, for I feared the appearance of one of my preposterous student friends, with his jargon of the duel and the beerhouse. But the next moment an enormous hand had dragged me into the realisation of my duties as a host by standing me on my feet amid the clatter of a falling chair.

"Why, Cousin Graden!" I cried, for indeed it was he who had thus treated me. "What cyclone has blown you here?"

"Egad! I believe it's the truth I've heard," said he, throwing himself on to a sofa that cracked again under his weight—he was a famed breaker of furniture was cousin Harry Graden. "They told me that you'd shut yourself up for nigh on two years—work, work, work—as if there was no young blood in your veins, and no green world lying around you, with not a yard of it that isn't

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worth all the most learned dissertations ever written."

I knew his favourite doctrine. It would have been as foolish to argue with him as to attempt to uphold the necessity for the Union with an Irish Home Ruler.

"But what are you doing here?" I repeated.

"It's to Berlin that I'm bound, to read a paper before a society that is good enough to be interested in some notes I took recently on the Kaffir witch-doctors. I'd a few days in hand, so I thought I would take a peep at my dear Heidelberg and, incidentally, at my worthy cousin, Robert Harland."

He rose and stalked about the room, clucking to himself like a contented hen.

"Same beer jugs and china pipes; same wainscot, a shade darker maybe; same old oak beams, a thought more smoky; same schlägers above the mantelpiece."

He took down one of the student's duelling-swords and slipped his hand into the heavy hilt. Raising his long arm into the orthodox attitude, he swept the keen thin blade in hissing circles.

"Do you ever tramp on the sawdust, and drum with the schläger, and bleed in the tank, Cousin Robert?"

"Not I. Though I have heard of your triumphs in the past, you man of blood!"

"And who has been gossiping?"

"Professor Von Stockmar. He asked me to supper the second day I arrived, for the sole purpose, as I believe, of impressing me with the fame of a certain duelling desperado of a student, one Henry Graden, who flourished in Heidelberg twenty years ago."

"What, Von Stockmar? Little Hermann? What a good fellow he was! Did you ever hear him sing a song about—but, of course, that's not possible. So little Hermann's a professor, is he? Are you under him?"

"No; I am with Professor Marnac."

Graden walked across to the fireplace and slowly filled a huge china pipe that lay thereon. He lit it and, turning his back to the empty grate, sent forth such puffs of smoke that he spoke as from out a cloud, mistily.

"He has made himself a great name, this Marnac. How do you stand with him, Cousin Robert?"

"I don't quite know. I was a great favourite of his in my first year."

"And now? Have you quarrelled?"

"Well, not exactly; it's a foolish story."

"The foolish stories are often of greater interest than the wise ones."

"Well, Cousin Graden," said I, leaning back in my chair and lighting a fresh cigarette, "if you want to hear it, I'll tell it you, and as shortly as may be. It began by the publication some six months ago of Professor Marnac's celebrated book, 'Science and Religion.'"

"Humph! a strong effort, full of suggestions," he grunted; "but brutal, callous, and revolutionary. It had a mixed reception, I believe."

"It had; and nowhere more so than in this University. Von Stockmar followed in by a pamphlet of unsparing criticism, which split the students into two bodies—the Marnac men and the Stockmar men. It was a pretty quarrel, and gave an excuse for a score of the inevitable duels."

"Did Marnac attempt a reprisal?"

"He did, and in the unusual form of reading aloud Von Stockmar's attack upon his theories to the class, of which I am a member. He appealed to us for sympathy. His agitation was remarkable. I declare that he snarled over his opponent's name like a dog over a bone; and a most unpleasant scene ended in a fit, from which we aroused him with difficulty."

"But this does not tell me how you came to be involved," he cried sharply, striding over to the table and plumping himself into a chair facing me.

"Have patience, my impetuous cousin. From the first I had always found a friend in Von Stockmar. I liked him, and we met frequently. The second day after the scene in the lecture-room I was walking with the cheery little man when we chanced upon Marnac. He gave me an ugly look, but said nothing. That night, however, he came to these rooms and abused me roundly. He reminded me of the interest he had shown in my work, called me a traitor to his party, and in other ways behaved with a childish absurdity. Naturally, I refused to give up a valued friend."

"You did right. But surely the affair has blown over?"

"To the contrary, the antagonism—on Marnac's side, at least—has grown still more bitter. Whenever I chance to be present, he misses no opportunity of attacking 'my dear friend,' as he calls Von Stockmar, in the most cruel and vindictive fashion. My position at his lectures is, I assure you, becoming most unendurable."

"You are too sensitive, Cousin Robert. The absurdities of a vain and jealous——"

Graden checked his unfinished sentence

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"'We neglect our visitor.'"

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with his nose cocked in the air like a gigantic terrier. Surprise and suspicion were in his expression and attitude. Then he rose slowly, as with an effort, and leant forward across the table, his knuckles resting on its edge.

"We neglect our visitor," said he gravely, and at his words I turned sharply in my chair.

In the shadows about the door, yet outlined with sufficient clearness against the black oak of the wainscot, a face stared in upon us. Around the head, crowned with a black skull-cap, fell a thick growth of white hair that was saint-like in length and beauty; the beard was of the like venerable purity. In a man of his apparent age the cheeks were curiously rosy, while the hand that held open the door was small as a woman's and delicate as old ivory. For a moment I thought that the eyes, exaggerated by the convex pebbles of great gold glasses, turned upon me with an expression of malicious satisfaction. Yet this was but an impression, for the gloom hung heavily about him where he stood, and my sight had not been unaffected by nights of study.

"Will not the gentleman step in?" Graden continued, with a reproach at my unhospitality in his voice.

Professor Rudolf Marnac—for it was he who thus honoured us—slid his diminutive figure through the door and advanced, with a courteous inclination, into the lamplight.

"My dear young sir," said he, in the soft musical English with which it was his custom to address me, "I should not have intruded myself at this late hour but that I am the bearer of painful news which I felt it right to communicate to you. Your friend, Hermann Von Stockmar, died this evening of acute inflammation of the lungs."

"Died?" I cried in bewilderment. "Why, I passed him in the street at midday looking well and hearty."

"Yes, it is even so, Mr. Harland. One moment a steady flame illuminating this University with its light; the next, a sigh from the conqueror Death and it is extinguished. The active brain is still; the pen, trenchant, incisive, destructive, is laid aside for ever."

It was an impressive homily; but from so open and vindictive a foe it seemed singularly inappropriate.

"You seem surprised," he continued. "I fear that encounters in the cause of science may have led the public to believe that poor Von Stockmar and I cherished personal animosities. If that is so, I trust you will use your influence to contradict it. My sorrow is already heavy enough—without that unwarrantable suspicion."

The Professor seemed deeply affected. Removing his spectacles, he pulled from his side pocket a large silk pocket-handkerchief. As he did so, a tinkle caught my ear. A square box of some white metal had fallen to the floor. It rolled into the lamplight, where the lid flew open. The Professor hastily clapped on his glasses; but already Graden had retrieved the box and was presenting it to him.

"There was nothing in it, sir," said he, for the Professor had stooped and was examining the carpet minutely.

"I thank you, I thank you."

"Pray do not mention it. Cousin Robert, if you and the Professor will excuse me, I will step across and take a last look at poor little Hermann. Where are his rooms?"

Before I could answer, the Professor was on his feet.

"Pray accept me as your guide," said he, moving towards the door. Graden bowed his thanks like a polite elephant. I followed the pair down the stairs.

It was growing late, and the narrow streets of the students' quarter were well-nigh deserted. A moon, like a polished shield, hung over the old castle above us, picking out each turret and parapet in silver grey against the sleeping woods that swept upward to the sky-line. Across our path the gabled house cast broad, fantastic pools of shadow. A wind had risen with the moon, and sighed and quivered in the roofs and archways. Once, from a distant beer-house, came the faint mutter of a rousing chorus, but soon it was swallowed and carried away by the midnight breezes.

We had not far to walk, and in five minutes the Professor was tapping discreetly with an ugly devil-face of a knocker on Von Stockmar's door. Presently the bolt was drawn, and Hans, the grey-bearded servant of the dead man, stood in the doorway, a lamp held high above his head. He blinked upon us moodily, with eyes dimmed by old age and recent tears, till, catching sight of Graden's huge bulk, he stepped forward with a snort of surprise, flashing the light in his face as he did so.

"By Heavens! but it is Heinrich der Grosse!" he stammered. "Ach! Herr Heinrich, but have you forgotten Hans of the Schlägers, servant of the honourable corps of the Saxo Borusen?"

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"No, no," said Graden, shaking the veteran by the hand. "So our little Hermann took you for his servant, as he promised? This is a sad day for us both, old friend. Tell me, how did it happen?"

"Do not ask me, Herr Heinrich. My mind wanders—I, who served him nigh on twenty years and was as a father and mother to him."

The worthy fellow put down the lamp in the little hall into which he had led us, and mopped his eyes with a hand that trembled with emotion.

But Graden persisted in his quiet way and soon extracted the details. It seemed that it was the custom of the dead Professor to take a nap after his midday meal. That afternoon, however, his sleep was unduly prolonged, and at four Hans,

"With a swift sideways turn of the head, he caught sight of our faces in the doorway."

who knew he had an engagement about that hour, slipped in to wake him. His master was lying on the couch in his bedroom, where he was wont to take his siesta. But he was in a curious, huddled position and breathing stertorously. Hans failed to rouse him, became alarmed, and hurried off for a neighbouring doctor. That gentleman diagnosed the case as a sudden and severe chill which had settled on the lungs, causing violent inflammation. Everything possible was done, but by eight he was dead. Beyond the remarkable violence of the seizure, the doctor had said, there was nothing unusual in the symptoms. Overwork had doubtless undermined the constitution and rendered it vulnerable to a sudden attack

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"And while he was asleep — had he visitors?" asked Grayden.

"The street-door is never locked during the day."

"But would you not have heard the steps?"

"It was my custom to sleep, too. Herr Professor allowed it."

"So. I should like to take a last look at your poor master, friend Hans. By the way, Cousin Robert, where is our guide, the learned Marnac? I did not see him leave the house."

"Perhaps the Professor Marnac has already gone to my master's room, the second to the right on the first floor," suggested the old servant.

In two strides my cousin was on the steep and narrow stairs. For a man of his age and size he mounted them with a surprising activity. Indeed, when I gained the landing he was already standing at the door of the room. He held up his hand with a warning gesture. I stepped up to him softly and peeped over his shoulder.

By the side of an old sofa placed against the wall of a room, half bed-chamber, half study, Professor Marnac crouched on his hands and knees. A lamp stood on the floor at his elbow. He was working with feverish haste, yet with a certain method, moving the lamp onward as his examination of the section lit by its immediate rays was completed. It was an odd sight, this silver-haired figure that crept about, peeping and peering, like some species of elderly ape. So absorbed was he that it was nigh on a minute before, with a swift sideways turn of the head, he caught sight of our faces in the doorway and rose to his feet.

"I can find no trace of it," said he, smoothing back his hair with a sigh. "It is excessively annoying."

"Of what, may I ask, sir?" I queried.

"Of my signet-ring, Mr. Harland. A valued possession which I would not lose for fifty pounds."

"Pray let me assist you," said I, stepping forward and raising the lamp, which the Professor had replaced on the table.

"No, no, Mr. Harland. Enough has been done; in the presence of death we must forget such trivialities. Besides, although it was on my finger when I entered the house, it may have been dropped in the hall or on the stairs. I do not doubt that Hans will find it."

The Professor spoke in so resolute a fashion that politeness did not demand that I should press the matter. My cousin had already passed behind a great screen of stamped leather that cut off the bed from the rest of the apartment. Marnac had stepped after him, and I, though at a slower pace, followed them. To be honest, the events of the evening had disturbed me not a little. I had grown suspicious, uneasy; and this annoyed me in that I was without reasonable cause for such a frame of mind. Granted that the Professor had displayed oddities of demeanour, yet he was notoriously an eccentric. And if my cousin had become taciturn, if his politeness rang insincerely, the death of his old friend——

"Stand back, Herr Professor! stand back, I say!"

It was Graden's voice, stern and decisive. I sprang to the corner of the screen and peered into the darkened alcove beyond.

Upon his death-bed pillows the calm and simple face of poor Von Stockmar gleamed like a mask carved in white marble. But neither of the two men who confronted each other across the body looked upon it. Graden, a grim and resolute figure, stood holding a common wooden match-box in his huge hands. He had opened it carelessly, for cheap sulphur matches were scattered on the sheet before him. Marnac's face I could not see, but in the pose of his back and shoulders there was something feline—something suggestive of an animal about to spring.

For a second or two the three of us stood in silence. My cousin was the first to break it.

"Pray do not let us detain you, Professor Marnac," said he. "Should we chance upon your ring, believe me, it will be safe."

The Professor straightened himself with a little gesture of submission and stepped back into the lamplight. His hand was on the latch, when he turned upon us—for we had followed him—with a face deformed with the most malignant fury.

"*Au revoir*, my friends," he cried. "I wish you a pleasant evening."

And then a fit of laughter took him—smothered, diabolical merriment that broke out in oily chuckles like water gurgling from a bottle. The door closed upon it. We stood listening as it grew fainter, fainter, until it died away in silence on the lower stairs.

"Turn the key, Cousin Robert. But, no; after him, lad, and bolt him out of the house. He'll be burning it down, else."

Graden was inexplicable; but I ran to

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obey. As I reached the hall, I heard the clang of the street door and the squeaking of the bolts as Hans shot them behind the departing visitor.

When I re-entered the room, I found the screen pushed back against the wall, and my cousin, in his shirt-sleeves, leaning over the bed. He barked at me over his shoulder to sit down and keep quiet, and I humbly obeyed him. Once or twice he turned to the lamp which he had at his elbow, and I caught the glimpse of a magnifying-glass.

"A round, fluffy ball rolled out and lay motionless."

Presently he rose, and, carrying the lamp in his hand, commenced a circuit of the room, lingering now and again to examine some object. At the dressing-table he paused for several minutes, using the magnifying-glass repeatedly. But shortly afterwards he threw himself into a chair beside me with the air of a man whose work is done.

"It's no disrespect to our little Hermann that I mean," said he, pulling out a big briar, "but smoke I must."

He sat there puffing for a minute or two, his head sunk forward, his eyes on the floor. I watched him expectantly.

"It's a great gift, is observation," he began. "It makes just the difference between mediocrity and success in game-hunters and novel-writers, in painters of pictures and explorers of the unknown lands, where a man has never a map to help him. And this same trick of observation has given me some very remarkable results this evening; and how remarkable you will realise when I set them out in proper order. You've a logical head, Cousin Robert, and I want you to give me your fullest attention. Contradict me if I overstate the case.

"Fact the first: That a certain celebrated scientist, Rudolf Marnac, had an ill feeling—a very ill and evil feeling—towards a certain brother-professor, one Hermann Von Stockmar. Fact the second: That Von Stockmar died suddenly."

"Of a natural cause, as certified by a competent physician," I added quickly.

"Exactly. Fact the third: Marnac, who

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considers you a deserter to the Stockmar camp—as, indeed, I gather from your own story—appears in your rooms to inform you of the sudden death of his enemy. Now, why should he do that?"

"He is an eccentric. A sudden whim, perhaps. We were very intimate once, you must remember."

"Though hardly so now, from his manner of regarding you when he first announced himself this evening."

"He might have caught what we were saying. Listeners hear no good of themselves, but that does not tend to improve their tempers."

"Well, let that pass. It brings us to fact number four: He tells a deliberate lie."

"A lie! But when?"

"The man was worth studying. When I first saw him this evening, I ran my eye over him. I especially noticed his hands—their suppleness, their delicate colour, their long, prehensile fingers. I do not doubt that he is very proud of them. He wore no ring—it is not the custom of those who deal with germs to so adorn themselves. What was he looking for so anxiously in this room, if it were not a ring? Why did he leave us in the hall that he might conduct this search before our presence disturbed him?"

"I cannot suggest an explanation; but really, Cousin Graden, you seem to be weaving a most unnecessary tangle. I cannot imagine what result you expect to obtain."

"A conviction for murder."

I stared at him in the most profound amazement.

"Yes, murder, Cousin Robert; as deliberate and cold-blooded a doing to death of an innocent man as has ever befouled a corner of God's fair world."

He rose from his chair and ploughed heavily up and down the room. The veins started in his forehead; his huge hands knotted themselves tensely.

"Listen. This afternoon a man lay asleep on that couch in the corner. We know the manner of man—a keen investigator, an indefatigable worker, an honest fighter; but one who had never done in all his life a mean or ignoble action. There comes a creak upon the stairs, the door is opened softly, a head peers in. He—the murderer—enters the room. He knew the custom of the house in this warm September weather: the doors open, the old servant asleep, the master taking his regular siesta. How far is he a criminal, how far a lunatic? Is this act premeditated, or the sudden tempting of opportunity? Who can say? It is enough that in his diseased imagination he has come to regard the sleeper as an enemy who maliciously set himself to destroy his theories and to bring ridicule on the laborious work of years. His desire for revenge against his critics at home and abroad is concentrated on the man before him.

"How the THING came into his possession I cannot guess, though that should be a point easily discovered. He himself may have obtained it from Africa, or it may have come into his hands by chance, as the chief of the Entomological Museum. But he has it safe enough, shut up in the tin box which fell from his pocket in your rooms. The spring of the lid was defective, you may remember; it is that same defective spring that will hang him.

"He stands over there, listening and watching. There is no sound; the sleeper will not wake. He opens the case upon the dressing-table and lifts the THING with tweezers—for every hair of it has its poison. With scissors he cuts off some score of hairs, catching them in the crease of a folded sheet of notepaper. He replaces it in the case and closes the lid. Like an ugly shadow he flits across to the couch, kneels by its side, and one, two, three times blows the hairs from the creased paper across the intake of the sleeper's breath. He turns, snatches up the case from the table, and is gone. In five hours Professor Von Stockmar is dead of inflammation of the lungs. There is not a doctor in all Germany who would challenge that diagnosis. In nine hours Professor Rudolf Marnac is accused by me, Henry Graden, of murder."

"But this deadly THING!" I cried, with a sinking horror at my heart. "This beast, reptile, insect—what is it? Where is it now?"

For answer he thrust his fingers into his pocket and drew out the same wooden match-box that I had seen him with by the bedside of the dead man. He slid it half open and tapped it sideways on the table under the lamp. A round, fluffy ball rolled out and lay motionless. Suddenly a little black head protruded, a score of tiny feet paddled into motion, and across the table there crept a hairy caterpillar—a loathsome, disreputable object, for across its back lay a ragged scar, where the hairs had been shorn away.

"Do you recognise the species?"

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In a faint-hearted way I leaned across to grasp it, but with a sudden motion he brushed my hand aside.

"I see you do not," said he grimly. "It is common enough in South Africa."

With the end of a match he carefully pushed the insect back into the box, and replaced it in his pocket.

"The luck was against Marnac," he continued. "Not for one moment do I suggest that otherwise I should have suspected the truth. To begin with, the defective spring of the case allowed the caterpillar to escape while he was bending over poor Hermann. After he had done his devil's work he slipped it back hastily into his pocket. He never realised what had occurred until, upon accidentally pulling it out with his handkerchief in your lodgings, he found it empty. It was for that reason he accompanied us here, for that reason he searched so anxiously. What became of it did not matter so long as it was not found in this room; though, as a matter of fact, there was very small danger, even then, of it affording a clue.

"And now we come to a stroke of abominable ill-luck, of which Marnac has every right to complain. I found the caterpillar on the sheet of the bed, where it had crawled in its wanderings. But that was not the worst of it, for I happened to be the one man in all Heidelberg who knew of its peculiar properties; who knew that its hairs are slightly poisoned, sufficient indeed to raise a nasty rash on the hand; who knew that the old-time Hottentots employed it for removing their enemies by blowing the hairs into their lungs. I took out a match-box, emptied it, and collected the caterpillar. I was closing the box when I looked up and saw Marnac watching me with a shocking expression, which could scarcely have distorted the face of a perfectly sane man, however provoked. Nearly every murderer has a screw loose somewhere; but, in my opinion, Marnac is in an unusually bad way. It may turn out more of an asylum than a gallows business, after all."

"But the details of the scene you picture; how did you obtain them?"

"I am a quick thinker, and the events of the evening began to arrange themselves in a sort of sequence, crowned by the discovery of the caterpillar. The inference to be gathered from them was obvious. I examined the nostrils of the dead man, and found four of the caterpillar hairs caught therein. On the dressing-table lay an ordinary pair of nail-scissors. Two hairs were jammed where the blades met. On the creased sheet of paper, which I found behind the couch, there was no sign; but the use to which it had been put was plain. From Hans I knew the custom of the house: the sleep after the midday meal, the open doors, the opportunity. Is the matter plain to you?"

"What are you going to do?" It was all that I could say.

"Nothing to-night. To appear at a German police-station at this hour with such an extraordinary story would be—for two foreigners, at least—the height of absurdity. Besides, there is no hurry; Marnac won't budge. He'll sit it out, never fear."

One o'clock clanged out from the steeples as I bade good-night to Graden at the door of my lodgings. He had already secured a room in a neighbouring hotel.

"Have you a lock on your bedroom door?" said he.

"I believe so."

"Well, use it to-night. We've an ugly customer to deal with; and the worst of it is that, unless I am much mistaken, he knows how much we know."

I watched him as he rolled away, a gigantic figure in the moonlight, waving the thick stick he carried. Never had my stairs seemed so uncomfortably dark, never had they creaked behind me so mysteriously. It was with a sigh of relief that I gained my room and by a quick glance assured myself that I was alone.

It seemed that I had only just dropped off into dreamland—for, indeed, sleep had been hard to woo that night—when a knocking at my door brought me from my bed. I unlocked and opened it. Cousin Graden filled the foreground.

"I didn't think he'd throw up the sponge," said he. "But he has, none the less. Marnac has bolted!"

"And you?"

"I shall follow."

So commenced those strange wanderings which I shall entitle "The Trail of the Dead."

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THE WASTE OF PUBLIC MONEY.

By ERNEST E. WILLIAMS,

Author of "The Imperial Heritage," "Made in Germany," "Marching Backward," and "The Foreigner in the Farmyard."

NOTE.—I wish at the commencement of these articles to remove a possible cause of misapprehension. It is necessary, in the course of them, to say hard things of members of the present Government; but that is because the present Government has been in office for a number of years beyond which, in order to keep the illustrations of bureaucratic methods up to date, it has not been thought desirable to travel. Criticisms involving the acts of Ministers are not to be interpreted as in any sense a party attack, and it is not suggested that had the Opposition been in office, its members would have done better.—E. E. W.

"THERE is something almost British in the want of ordinary business method in the Peking Government Bureaus." Thus wrote an Englishman, the Shanghai correspondent of the *Times*. Could a more humiliating confession be made? Wanting to bring home vividly before the minds of his English readers the scandalous lack of business methods which pervade the effete despotism of China, this correspondent could think of no more telling image than the methods of bureaucracy at home.

It is, indeed, a heavy indictment. But it is an indictment the truth of which has to be admitted with the more perfect assent in proportion as the methods of British bureaucracy are pursued in their ramifications. In succeeding articles I purpose to bring before you but one side of this appalling condition of mismanagement, but that side is big enough to claim most serious attention. Leaving alone the many other ways in which the Government and its servants hold up models to the world of how not to do it—their red tape, their marvellous aptitude for rubbing people's feelings the wrong way without reason or advantage, for example—it will suffice to concentrate our attention upon one aspect: the scandalous waste of public money which is involved in the methods of unbusinesslike officialdom.

A GRAVE AND INCREASING MENACE.

This is a subject of crying moment in any State at any time where the evil exists, but in England to-day the matter is specially urgent. Until a few years ago Chancellors of the Exchequer used as a normal feature of their work to present Parliament with Budgets showing surpluses which admitted of decreases in taxation. First one impost was decreased, and then another knocked off, and the British taxpayer came quite to regard these diminutions of calls upon his purse as one of the incidents of progressive civilisation. While such an agreeable process lasted, criticism was obviously at a discount. It would have been churlish to have picked holes in the expenditure of the country in the circumstances, and no one did it. But those circumstances have ceased to operate. Since the Budget of 1899 an opposite process has been at work. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has had each year to ask for more revenue to meet increasing expenditure, and though a great deal of this new expenditure has been for the conduct of the South African war, yet a substantial part also has been for permanent purposes. And increased expenditure of the permanent kind we have been seriously and officially warned has not reached its zenith yet. What with the need for a bigger and more efficient Army and Navy, what with the need for spending more freely upon Education, what with the problems of expenditure for social purposes—Old Age Pensions and the like; questions which for the moment have been forced into the background, but will soon press forward again—it is clear that the taxpayer will be forced to make more contributions in the future than he is doing even to-day; and in such circumstances he can no longer afford to shut his eyes to Governmental laches. The bill is getting so tremendous that each item in it must be checked; and where waste is discovered, where it can be shown that full value is not received for the money which is expended, there must be rigid scrutiny, followed by thorough reform. Just

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as we are supposed nowadays to have reformed, or to be reforming, the War Office, so every branch of the public service must be overhauled; and it is to be hoped that the overhauling will be more effective than in the case of recent changes in the War Department. The waste practised by our bureaucracy is exhibited alike in the overburdened permanent charges of the various Departments and in the different works—the occasional charges—undertaken by the Departments.

About those Contracts.

Much of the waste is of a sort which does not obtrude itself upon the general gaze, but from time to time instances come conspicuously before the eyes even of the man in the street. Of such are the chronic scandals regarding Government contracts; and the South African war has furnished a goodly crop of them. Inquiries into some of these contracts have already been forced upon the Government. It is unfortunately necessary to use the word "force," for the present Government has displayed a deplorable reluctance to question the alleged misfeasances of its servants, and particularly to make those misfeasances public. The habit of secrecy is unfortunate, not only because it leads to the hushing up of scandals upon which publicity would act as a check in regard to future repetition, but also because it is applied all through the Government business and in matters where the advantages to be gained from secrecy are more than outweighed by the disadvantages.

The Fungus which Grows in Darkness.

The Government, for example—and here I am speaking of the present Government's predecessors as well as of itself—has displayed a rooted objection to making tenders and contracts public. It is the taxpayer who foots the bill, but he is not allowed to learn the details of the bill. This matter was discussed in the House of Lords in February last in connection with the South African meat contracts, and it may be well to give the official defence of secrecy. Lord Raglan said: "It might often be the cause of great loss to a firm, when they made a quotation for ordinary purposes, to have thrown in their teeth the rate at which they had quoted to the Government under a contract for, probably, very much larger quantities." Lord Raglan fortified this argument by asserting that when, in 1888 the Directors of Navy and Army Contracts were instructed to consult the leading commercial authorities in the country with the view to making tenders public, they consulted one hundred and three individual firms and seventy chambers of commerce, and the answers they received "were almost unanimously in favour of the existing practice of not making tenders public." Upon the occasion of this debate the Marquis of Lansdowne came to the assistance of his colleague by recalling to the House the evidence contained in the replies of the commercial persons and bodies referred to by Lord Raglan. Let us quote from Lord Lansdowne: "The evidence was overwhelming in the direction of establishing that it was most unfair to the trade, as well as most inconvenient to the public, that particulars of tenders of this kind should be generally made known. Among the reasons were these: They said the manufacturers, as a rule, were ready to quote to Government Departments rates lower than those which they gave to private persons, the reasons being that sometimes they desired to keep their workmen employed, the magnitude of Government orders, the security against bad debts, the prestige of holding Government contracts. Those persons who were consulted believed that if once the habit of publishing these tenders were adopted, the effect would be to encourage cutting prices amongst the different firms which would have for result that, after perhaps a tender had been accepted from a well-known and thoroughly trustworthy firm, another firm would come in and put in a price fractionally lower, a price which would be unremunerative, but which it would be difficult for the Government to refuse, and which at the same time might lead to its having to depend on much less reliable sources of supply. Hence they would have inferior goods sent in, a large proportion of rejections, and bad blood and ill feeling engendered."

The Minister as Man of Business.

I have quoted this official defence of the practice at some length because the laboured arguments used by Lord Lansdowne and Lord Raglan are their own refutation. Look at Lord Raglan's contention about manufacturers having thrown in their teeth a lower rate granted to the Government for, as Lord Raglan naïvely observes, "probably very much larger quantities." Why, this is the very essence of business; it is what

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happens all over the world in every trade. There is always "a reduction on taking a quantity," and if any small consumer threw in the teeth, to use Lord Raglan's phrase, of a manufacturing firm the lower rate given for a much larger quantity, that trader would be very quickly invited to learn the elements of business. No man of business expects the same terms for a small quantity of goods as for a large quantity, and to Lord Raglan's contention that it might be the cause of great loss to a firm if the small trader found out that the big Government Department got its stuff cheaper, it may be replied that the small trader is aware of the

of commerce are in a somewhat different category, but chambers of commerce are often small bodies run by a few energetic individuals, and strange things are sometimes done in the name of bodies so constituted. How publicity could be "most inconvenient to the public," Lord Lansdowne should have told us, for the bare statement is certainly absurd.

Why they Want Secrecy.

The real objection to publicity which is felt by the firms interested peeps out in their curious argument that the effect of publication

"'Can we make contractors?' plaintively asked Mr. Brodrick."
From one of Mr. Ralph Cleaver's sketches at the Debate on the War Contracts.

fact, and even if he were not, the manufacturing firm could lose nothing by the fact being published, any more than a railway company suffers harm from publishing the fact that it will carry full truck-load consignments at a lower rate than odd parcels.

As to the one hundred and three firms and the seventy chambers of commerce who objected to publicity, I imagine that those one hundred and three firms were firms upon the Government list or with prospects of getting there, and naturally they preferred a system which would keep Government contracts as far as possible a close preserve. Their opinion is certainly not of much weight in this question. The chambers would be to encourage cutting prices. The encouragement of cutting prices is—so the plain man has always thought in his innocence—the very object for calling for tenders at all, and certainly it is an object with which the taxpayers, the men who have to pay the bill, would sympathise. And how pitiful is the contention that price-cutting competitors would oust trustworthy firms and foist inferior goods upon the Government! Are the firms which the Government employs always so trustworthy? Scandals which have been revealed do not bear out this assertion. Again, are there not Government officials capable of discovering whether the goods sent to them under the tender

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come up to the agreed standard of quality? And if the standard is not complied with, does not that break the contract? Finally, no one contends that the Government should in all cases accept the lowest tender. In any case, when the lowest tender came from a firm of whose ability to execute it properly the Government had doubts, that tender would of course cease to be, in the real sense of the word, the lowest.

In point of fact, the advantages of publicity are outweighed by the disadvantages. Publicity would stimulate healthy competition, would remove from the public the suspicion, sometimes too well founded, that under the present system they do not get value for their money, and would help materially to avoid the scandals and bad bargains whose recurrence is so lamentably frequent.

The Story of the Meat Contracts.

A grave assertion was made in the House of Commons during the debate on the war contracts last March. "The country," said Mr. Whitley, "has received only fifty millions of value out of the one hundred millions spent on supplies for the Army in South Africa, the other fifty millions having gone into the pockets of the contractors." That is a concise and emphatic statement of what had been common talk since the very beginning of the war. In the early days men were whispering as to the gigantic profits made by certain providers of supplies, and later came the revelations concerning the scandalous prices paid for horses, meat, and the like. At the moment let us glance at the meat contracts, for here we shall find a most clamant illustration of the way in which our expensive Government organisation wastes the public's money when it gets the chance.

Mr. Whitley reiterated in detail the assertion I have just quoted, and he said that "as far as the meat supply was concerned, we had not got ten shillings value for every pound spent." That is a round assertion, but an examination of the matter shows that its author is only guilty of pardonable exaggeration, if of that.

Here are the essential facts. In the early stages of the South African war the Government entered into a contract with a Company for the supply of meat and fruits. Under this first contract, which lasted for a year and a half, the Government paid 10*d.* to 11*d.* per lb. for meat. After the expiration of this contract it made another with the same Company, which lasted for twelve months, and under this it paid 7*d.* per lb. The obtaining of this second contract at 7*d.* is, upon the face of it, a condemnation of the Government officials who paid the 10*d.* and 11*d.* under the first contract.

But that is not the whole story. So far from the 7*d.* of the second contract representing a fair price—the lowest price which the Government could obtain—it was itself seriously in excess of the price at which the meat might have been obtained. Mr. Bergl, who obtained a subsequent contract, stated to a representative of the *British Australasian* that at the time the Government was paying the above-named prices under the old contracts, the Company receiving those prices was buying meat from him at 3*d.* to 3½*d.* per lb. Mr. Bergl, who may be credited with expert knowledge upon this subject, and had certainly no object in minimising the cost of distribution, said that the utmost which could be charged for carriage was 2*d.* per lb. Upon this computation, then, the meat should have been obtained at the rate of about 5*d.* per lb.—half of what was paid under the first contract; while under the second contract, nearly 50 per cent. too much was paid. It will be seen that Mr. Whitley was not so far out when he declared in the House of Commons that "we had not got ten shillings value for every pound spent."

The Giant Profits.

Further proof of the scandalous waste involved in these contracts is shown in the enormous profits made by the Company in question. What those profits really did amount to, I cannot find out. Lord Raglan, the Under Secretary for War, stated in the House of Lords that he had no information. Mr. Bergl stated to the *British Australasian* interviewer that in his opinion the Company during the first year and a half must have made 4½ millions, and in the next year another 1½ millions. The ostensible figure appears to be 2 millions, for in two years a million was paid in dividends and another million was put to reserve (the Company's capital only amounted to £450,000). This was up to June, 1901, and the Government contract ran for nine months subsequently. No wonder our war has been expensive!

Moreover, as if the contract price for meat were not high enough, the Government put even more money into the pockets of

the contractors by its arrangement for selling captured cattle in South Africa to the contractors, who resold it to the troops at an exceedingly handsome profit, the price paid by the contractors being 8*d.* per lb., and that charged by them when they resold to the Army being 11*d.* per lb. And there are stories in circulation of the same cattle being captured and recaptured several times over, with a fresh profit for the contractors each time. The officials further went out of their way to put more money into the contractors' pockets by compelling the military authorities to hand over the wagons which they had previously themselves been hiring from the Boers at 30*s.* a day to the meat contractors, and the meat contractors charged £3 per day for these wagons; so that it has been calculated, after allowing 10*s.* a day for deficiencies and contingencies, that the contractors cleared a profit of £1 per day per wagon.

Ministerial Apologies.

The Government, when brought to book, fell back for its defence upon the alleged heavy cost of distribution of the meat. Lord Raglan spoke of "the very great difficulty of distributing this enormous amount of meat over a very large country during a state of war. If it were merely a question of the carriage of so many live animals over the railway, it would be very easy to calculate the cost; but under this contract the contractor was liable not only to carry the beasts from one place to another, but also to provide herdsmen and butchers, the appliances for killing and weighing, and so forth." The poverty of the Government's case is exposed in this reply. The Army authorities gave every facility for carriage and distribution, and the circumstances under which these services were conducted, though difficult in a way, cannot have been so extraordinarily expensive to the contractors. It is no unusual thing for herdsmen to accompany cattle, and it is verging upon the ridiculous to make a display of "the appliances for killing and weighing"—a poleaxe and a pair of scales. Lord Carrington said he was informed upon good authority that there was no expense whatever in distribution, and obviously that is so in regard to railway carriage, meat, like other things, having been carried free.

And the fact of the enormous profits remains to show that the prices paid to the contractors were totally unjustifiable. Lord Lansdowne tried to make a point out of the long delay in the military operations at the Modder River, when, as it was possible to supply the troops with frozen meat carried by rail, the contractors made a better profit than when the Army was on the march. But the delay at the Modder River, after all, covers only a small part of the war period, and even when it lasted only applied to a part of the Army. That circumstance, therefore, can only go an insignificant way towards justifying the enormous profits.

Nor was it such exceptionally good meat that the Government was justified in paying extraordinary prices. The Agent-General for New Zealand contended that "for two years the War Office has been buying meat for South Africa which any butcher would tell you was inferior to New Zealand"; and New Zealand meat could have been landed in South Africa at between 3½*d.* and 4*d.* per lb.

Its Poor Best.

But the defence upon which the Government really relied chiefly appears to have been that mentioned by Lord Lansdowne in the House of Lords on the 20th of February, that the contracts were the best which the Government was able to enter into in the circumstances—those circumstances being the risk involved in doing business in a disturbed country, on account of which no contractor would undertake the work except with the prospect of big profits.

The complete answer to this contention is that numbers of people, when the contracts became known, expressed their willingness to supply meat at much cheaper rates, and that the Government itself, while the war was still in progress and the country was still gravely disturbed, entered into a third contract at lower prices, from which they expected to save some £700,000 over even the second contract.

How Money Might Have Been Saved.

Here are some instances of the offers which were made to them. In January last the Agent-General for New South Wales complained that he had been unable to obtain from the War Office any information as to tenders for the new contract, the War Office not even replying to his letters, though his Government had requested him to place two tenders before the War Office, one of which offered to supply 3,000 tons of frozen beef and mutton per month at 4*d.* per lb., the other

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offering to supply them at 3¾*d.* per lb. These were not tenders for a partial supply; one of them would have been large enough for the whole South African army. Again, Sir Montague Nelson, Chairman of the Colonial Consignment and Distributing Company, called at the War Office and offered to supply all the meat necessary for South Africa at about ½*d.* above cost price, this quotation to include cost, freight, and insurance to port.

These two instances, with the prices mentioned by the New Zealand Agent-General, referred to previously, dispose of Lord Lansdowne's contention that the Government in the first two contracts did the best it could in the circumstances. They also prompt the suggestion that even in the third and latest contract made by the Government, after all the exposure of the old contracts, the Government did not make such a marvellously good bargain.

The Latest Performance.

The prices in this new contract were: For live meat about 8½*d.* per lb., and for frozen meat about 5½*d.* per lb. These prices include distribution, whereas the 4*d.* per lb. for frozen meat offered by the Colonial Government was for delivery to port only. But does the cost of distribution come to as much as 1½*d.* per lb.? The gentleman who got this contract was Mr. Bergl, whose published statement that the utmost cost of distribution during the worst days of the war was 2*d.* per lb. I have already quoted. It was not Mr. Bergl's business to cry down the cost of the services he was engaging to perform, and if in the worst days of the war distribution must have cost something less than 2*d.* per lb., it ought to have been considerably less than 1½*d.* per lb. when the country was comparatively settled and the work of distribution in consequence easy. Anyway, it seems difficult to understand why the Government, with an adequate military organisation available for distributing its own food supplies, should have been so enamoured of the middleman and his profits that it should have refused to attempt to save money by buying meat at ¼*d.* per lb. delivered at the ports, instead of paying what look like unduly high charges, and are certainly uneconomical charges, for middleman's services. It is not even as though the contractors undertook any risk in their work of distribution. The contract provides for the payment of full compensation for any loss or damage by the enemy sustained in respect to animals ordered to accompany columns in the field; risk, as well as cost, was reduced to a minimum. Nor is it that the meat was to be of such superior quality, for in the conditions of contract it is stipulated that cow beef may be used.

"Can we Make Contractors?"

Why, then, did the Government make the present contract? Its own explanation is that tenders were hard to get. "Can we make contractors?" plaintively asked Mr. Brodrick, when defending the new contract in the House of Commons. There was no necessity to try to make contractors; they were there already—thirty of them; and all but three were ruled out because most of the others, though cheaper, did not offer to undertake the work of distribution. And it is curious that one of these three should afterwards turn out to be the backer of another of the three—the man who actually got the contract. All this sounds like excellent business from the contractors' point of view, but not from that of the public; and it is not surprising that ministers resisted giving any information on the subject until it was literally dragged out of them.

One would naturally look for an explanation in the contention of Lord Lansdowne, which I have already quoted, about the need for accepting only the tenders of "well-known and trustworthy firms"; but there were well-known and trustworthy firms among the tenders rejected; while the gentleman who got the contract had not a pre-eminently strong financial record.

At least, in such circumstances, one would have imagined that the Government would have kept a sharp eye and plenty of control over the way in which the contract was to be carried out. But here again natural expectation is doomed to disappointment. Mr. James Lowther asked the Financial Secretary for the War Office whether any of the contracts were sub-let. Lord Stanley didn't know. "I do not know what the nature of the arrangements made by Mr. Bergl is"; and added, with unconscious irony, "our business was to secure as far as we could due economy to the public." An extraordinary way of setting about that business! And when Mr. Lowther pressed that the authorities should be asked to procure information as to sub-letting, Lord Stanley answered: "I do not think we can possibly call upon them to do so."

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The Boredom of Business.

The above are the leading facts in connection with the South African war contracts for meat. They show, from the first contract made without any preliminary open tender, and made at most exorbitant and extravagant prices, down to the new contract made last spring, when Colonial tenderers, who had been already badly treated and neglected, were again turned out in the cold, though at least as good and probably better contracts might have been made with them, that the War Office has acted throughout in the most unbusinesslike way, has proceeded upon methods which would have landed any private firm in bankruptcy, and has wasted millions of public money at a time when the country was being heavily taxed to support almost unparalleled war charges. It is fair to ask whether a bureaucracy capable of wasting money upon this prodigious scale, at a time when necessary expenditure was so high that not a penny should have have been thrown away, is likely to practise economy in ordinary seasons.

When the meat business contract was being debated in the House of Commons, Mr. Balfour said: "For myself, I may confess to being rather bored with it." There is food for meditation in that remark.

(*The "text" for the second article in this series will be "The Remount Scandals."*)

TWO.

By KATIE WHITING PATCH.

I AM two women, though the world at large
Knows me for one—the woman you see here:
Impulsive, thoughtless, thoughtful, weak and strong,
Impatient, faulty—yet by some held dear
Because she loves them, and because her ways
Have grown familiar to their blame or praise.

The other woman wears a diadem.
She dwelleth only in my lover's eyes.
No others see her crown—'tis not for them.
She is a queen, all beautiful and wise—
The woman he believes me! On my knee
I pray that I may yet that woman be!

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MARGERY COADE.

By S. BARING-GOULD.*

MARGERY COADE was a personality in Porthvean. She was not only a good-looking young woman of five-and-twenty years, but she was also one of substance. Her father and mother had kept a shop where everything could be bought that the inhabitants of a small Cornish mining village needed for daily use: groceries, drapery, penny packets of notepaper and envelopes, boots, shoes, thimbles and needles —everything but pots, pans, and hardware.

There had been two mines in the parish, Wheel Venture and Wheel Meor; and Margery's parents had risked their savings in Wheel Meor, which throve, whereas most of those who had anything to sink in mines had thrown their earnings into Wheel Venture and had lost it all.

After the death of her parents, Margery carried on the shop with the assistance of a cousin, Prudence Jago, kept in due subordination, as a mere shop-help.

But there was something further in Miss Coade than good looks and a comfortable income. She was a very direct person, who said what she thought, and in all her conduct took a straight line. This is not a Cornish characteristic. The Cornish man and woman prefer a circuitous or a serpentine course. If the former desires to know his way to—let us say Truro, he will ask the direction of every other road except that one he purposes treading; and if the latter is in want of a thimble, she will cheapen a packet of needles.

The decided straightforwardness of Margery was so phenomenal in Porthvean that she was looked upon as a mysterious being of another kind and was regarded with no little awe.

Margery Coade had two suitors, who only —characteristically—proclaimed themselves as desiring her hand after having begun operations by making advances towards Prudence Jago, the shop-assistant. It was solely when these two suitors found that Prudence was quite ready to meet them both, and throw herself into the arms of him who was nearest, that each hurriedly changed direction and approached Margery herself.

Both of these men were miners, both working in Wheel Meor.

One was Stephen Legassick, a fine, upright — physically so—man, with fair hair. As to his character, it was blameless; but, like the rest of his race, he was accustomed to devious though not wrongful ways.

The other was Reuben Treherne, a sallow, grave, and dark-haired man, inclined to taciturnity, whereas Stephen was a voluble talker.

After each had revealed his purpose, as aspirant for her hand, heart, shop, and shares, after much tergiversation, Margery found that she must herself decide which to have, or whether to reject both.

There was a good deal to be said in favour of each. Stephen, as already intimated, was blonde, and Margery had the West Cornish dark eyes and hair. It is a common opinion that in marriage a disparity of complexion and colour is most conducive to happiness. Stephen was a talker, and what he thought was manifested to all. Margery knew him thoroughly, and was convinced that he was amiable, not violent in temper, and yielding.

But there were drawbacks. There was in him a tendency to be inert. If made possessor of herself and her income, he might give up work, and bring in nothing to the business, and simply live on her accumulations. Then again, his talkativeness was a disadvantage. He might, in the expansiveness of his nature, make public all the matrimonial tiffs that were likely to ensue, and even reveal trade secrets—the staleness of certain biscuits and the cost price of certain draperies.

As to Reuben Treherne, he was so reserved that she had nothing to fear on this latter score. Nor need she dread that he would become a sleeping partner in the firm. But she did not know him as she did Stephen. He did not turn himself inside out, for all the world to see the stitches, knots, and selvages within, as did Stephen. In his dark eyes lurked a sombre fire. He might be passionate if provoked—and what married woman does not set before her as the highest ambition, the provocation to exasperation of the man whom she takes to her, that she

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may trample on him? Of Stephen, she could predicate that she would be master, but no such certainty existed in her mind relative to Reuben.

Then the religious difficulty occurred to her. Stephen belonged, as did she, to the New Connexion Methodists, whereas Reuben was a Particular Baptist. On the other hand, Stephen was lax in chapel-going, whereas Reuben was so strict as to be regarded as a sealed member. What theological differences existed between the two bodies, Margery did not know, any more than did the ministers of these several denominations. The division was rather social than doctrinal; and the Methodists stood on a higher cultural level, or were thought to do so at Porthvean, than did the Baptists. The advantages and the disadvantages on each side presented themselves recurrently to Margery's mind and made her unable to come to a determination which to select. The two men hung about the shop, encountered her when she went abroad; on Sunday each offered to walk her out, and with impartiality she accorded a promenade on one Sunday to Stephen, and on the next to Reuben. So exact was her sense of justice, that having allowed Stephen to associate with her on Christmas Day, she gave up Good Friday to Reuben.

The progress of the suit of these two men was a matter of much interest and discussion in the village; and it was solely the sense of the wickedness of betting that prevented books being made on the chances in the running of Stephen and Reuben.

It must be admitted that Margery, in every other matter so decided, was unable to come to a determination in this. On one day, after a long night's reflection, she was disposed to accept Reuben, and on the next, after another wakeful night, to feel her inclination bend towards Stephen.

Matters were at length brought to a crisis. One Sunday the minister in the New Connexion chapel preached on the text, "Let love be without dissimulation," and he drew such a lively and graphic picture of a girl halting in her mind, and driving her lovers to desperation, that all the congregation looked at Margery, and she felt convinced that the preacher was levelling at her, and wanted her to take Stephen, though irregular in his connection with the Methodists, rather than Reuben, who was not a Methodist at all.

Margery Coade strode home in boiling indignation. The minister had dared to interfere; and, to spite him, she would take Reuben. She would not even speak to Stephen, who paced at her side, till she reached her door, when she turned on him and said: "When you leave work to-morrow, come here, and I will let you know my intention. Tell Reuben to come as well."

"He is on my core, and so I can easily do that," said Stephen. "At what time?"

"When your core leaves work. Wash and clean up, and comb your heads, and come in your Sunday clothes; and you shall know your fates."

"All right," said Stephen, and he walked away with his hands in his pockets, chuckling.

At that moment Reuben Treherne came up from his chapel, and his full dark eyes rested sadly on Margery. She felt a qualm. Those eyes were full of a depth of feeling which she could never see in the light grey orbs of Stephen.

"I say, Reuben, mate!" called Stephen, "her wants a word with'y. Her be goin' to make up her mind at last."

"Yes," said Margery. And she repeated the injunction — this time addressed to Reuben. "To-morrow I will tell which of you two I will have."

"A bad day it will be for one of us," said Reuben, and went on.

Now it fell out that on this day Margery Coade's cat kittened and had six. The cat was a tabby, and of the little creatures some took after the mother, but others after the presumed father, black with white paws, and a white patch on the face. One, however, was wholly white.

Margery could not allow six kittens to be reared; and she had conscientious scruples against destroying life on a Sunday. Accordingly, she postponed till the morrow the destruction of five of the little creatures. As to which she should retain from among them, she did not consider. It did not comport with the sacredness of the day to discuss such a matter in her own mind. But after she had finished her supper, and had scolded Prude for levity in ogling some boys through the window, she retired to rest, and counting the Sunday practically over, felt herself free to debate which of the kittens to retain and which of the suitors to dismiss.

Accordingly she spent a troubled night, weighing the respective merits of the candidates and little cats, and conjuring up pictures of the unhappy consequences that might ensue should she make a wrong selection—not of a kitten, but of a husband. But at length her mind was relieved. She had formed a resolve. Providence should decide for her between the two young men,

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as she was quite incapable of herself making the selection.

On the following day Stephen and Reuben arrived, in their glossy new cloth coats, and with faces as glossy as soap could make them, and with hair redolent and shining with pomatum.

Margery Coade was prepared to receive them.

"You mind the shop," said she peremptorily to her cousin; "and be so good, Mr. Legassick and Mr. Treherne, as to walk into my little parlour."

She led the way. Tea was on the table, and buns, also a plate of sponge-cakes—such as defy time, never becoming staler than on the day when called into existence.

She felt that she had given an undue preference to Stephen in inviting him within before Reuben, and a look of triumph had lighted his face; but this she neutralised by pouring out tea and offering cake to Treherne before Legassick. Whereupon Stephen's face fell, and a corresponding look of anticipation of victory illumined that of Reuben.

"'To-morrow I will tell which of you two I will have.'"

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The meal proceeded heavily. None was in a talkative mood, not even the blonde Legassick; each sipped tea, ate a bun, and partook of a finger of sponge-cake, as if engaged on a funeral collation. Margery assumed lightness of spirits, but was too honest and downright to be able to disguise the real anxiety that oppressed her.

The sponge-cakes ended, both the suitors bowed to gather up the crumbs of the very dry cakes they had inadvertently let fall upon the floor, to collect them into the palms of their hands, and consume them by the aid of their tongues.

Then Margery put aside the teacups, removed the buns, returned such sponge-fingers as had not been eaten to the tin cases which they usually occupied; and having cleared the table, she seated herself, laid her hands on her lap, and said—

"Gen'lemen both, as has done me the honour to seek my hand and heart, I have given your offers the greatest consideration, and I may assure you that I respect you both—equally. I hear you both highly spoken of equally. And if there be a little betterment in one over the other in one particular, it is counterbalanced by a betterment in another particular in the other. Now, it would be a terrible misfortune for me if I was to chose the wrong one of you two. And in such a serious matter as this affecting my happiness, I have made up my mind to refer the choice to Destiny. Yesterday, bein' the Sabbath, my cat kittened and had six at a birth. Among them there kittens is one white one; and that is the little creature as I intends to rear. The others go into the water-butt. Gen'lemen both, it is my firm intent to have you both blindfolded. And, bein' blindfolded, you shall draw, in turn, from under the mother-cat, her kittens, one by one."

"But she will claw us," protested Stephen.

"What o' that?" asked Margery sternly. "What is a little blood lost—if I may be gained thereby?"

"I'll do it," said Reuben gravely.

"So will I, come what comes," said Stephen.

"And he as has the good fortune to draw the white kitten gains me," concluded Margery.

"Who draws first?" inquired Stephen.

"For to begin—simultaneous," said Margery. "You shall both put in your hands together, and he as draws out the lightest coloured kitten shall have the first turn after that. Prue!" she called, "be there anyone in the shop?"

"No, Cousin Margery," answered Miss Jago, coming to the inner door.

"Then, Prue, be so good as to blindfold Mr. Legassick and Mr. Treherne. But first, gen'lemen both, look at the basket in the corner where the cat is."

The miners were forthwith blindfolded and then thrust forward, by the hands of Margery applied to their backs, in the direction of the cat. Both stooped at once; the mother hissed and snarled, but each manfully thrust in a hand and drew forth a kitten.

"Mr. Legassick has won," said Margery; "his is a tabby."

"Not so," returned Reuben, who had lifted the handkerchief from his eyes; "mine may be a black kitten, but there is white about'n—white gloves and a white mask."

"But my kitten is the lightest in colour generally," declared Stephen, also uncovering his eyes.

"I don't care about that; there's no white in yours, and there is on mine."

"I pronounce that Mr. Legassick has won the first draw," said Margery.

"Now, Prue, blind the gentlemen again, and Mr. Legassick has the first try."

Accordingly both were bandaged, and, that done, Stephen was led to the basket.

The cat was by no means content to have her kittens withdrawn—she spat and clawed at the man; but after one or two ineffectual attempts, Stephen pulled forth a third kitten—and lo! it was the white pussy.

"Take off your blind, Reuben Treherne," said Margery, with great solemnity. "There's no draw for you; at the first Stephen has won me by pulling forth the white kitten."

"It should ha' been mine in fairness," said the disappointed man, removing the kerchief from his eyes. "In all right I ought to have had the first draw. My kitten had white about it, Stephen's hadn't ne'er a speck."

"And if you had been given the first chance, you might have drawn a tabby."

"I'd have had as good a likelihood to get the white 'un as Stephen. It hasn't been fair. I'm a wronged and grieved man, that I be—a man as hasn't had measure weighed to'n in even balances, and I feels it and I resents it."

He thrust his hands behind his back and went from the room, through the shop and out of the house.

"Now, then," said Margery, "name the day."

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"And lo! it was the white pussy."

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The marriage took place within the month. On the day following said Margery to her husband: "Stephen, are you on the day or the night core?"

"I—I didn't think of going on none more."

"But I intended it. You are not going to eat your bread in idleness. Which core ought you to be on now?"

"The night," he replied disconcertedly.

"Very well, get on your every-day clothes and go down the mine as usual to-day, when the day core comes up, just as if nothing had happened. You've been playing for a week, haven't you?"

"For ten days or so."

"But I have kept shop. You have had no cause to cease working. You return to Wheel Meor to-day."

Stephen was forced to submit. Little did Margery imagine that she was sending him to his death. Not an hour had elapsed since his departure before he was brought to her house a corpse. While he was descending the shaft with some other men on the night shift, a piece of rock had fallen, struck him from the ladder, and precipitated him to the bottom, whence he was removed stone dead.

The particulars were as follows: Stephen was descending the ladder first, after him was Reuben Treherne, and then third, and above the other, Barnaby Goff. Another man, Thomas Pentally, was on the upper stage or landing, and about to descend, when the accident took place.

A coroner's inquest ensued, but not immediately, as the officer was engaged at the further end of his district and could not reach Porthvean till the third day.

Meanwhile Margery had brooded over the circumstances, and had come to the conclusion that Reuben had caused the death of his successful rival.

At the inquest she insisted on appearing and giving her evidence. "I say," she spoke in hard, resolute tones, "that he was murdered, and his murderer is there—Reuben Treherne."

"You have no right to say this," observed the coroner, "unless you have evidence to give to substantiate so terrible an accusation."

"I have evidence," retorted Margery. "I heard that man Reuben threaten him."

"What did he say? Give me the exact words."

"You must know, sir, that Reuben Treherne and Stephen Legassick were both my suitors, and that on Sunday, the eleventh of last month, after chapel in the evening, I said as how next day I'd give 'em their answer. And then Reuben he said: 'It'll be a bad day for one of us.'"

"Well," said the coroner, "there was nothing in that. Of course it would be a bad day for the loser."

"That wasn't his meanin'; he meant as how he'd do for Stephen."

"Now, now," interrupted the coroner. "You may repeat words, but not force meanings into them which they will not bear, nor pretend to read the purposes of the heart. Is that all?"

"It is not all," retorted Margery, bridling up. "On the Monday, the 12th, at 5 p.m., the two men came to my house, and there I decided which to have."

"It wasn't a fair trial," put in Reuben, who was present and a principal witness. "I chose the kitten with the white pats and face."

"You must not interrupt," ordered the coroner.

"The tabby was the lighter colour, and the trial was quite fair," protested Margery.

"What does this all mean?" inquired the coroner.

Then the story came out, to the great amusement of those present, who could not restrain their amusement, notwithstanding the solemnity of the occasion.

"And then did Reuben Treherne threaten the deceased?"

"Yes, he did."

"What did he say?"

"He said as how he was a wronged man, and how he ought to have had me. You see, sir, me meant a lot. It meant not only me, but my shop, and the shares in Wheel Meor."

"That was no threat. Did he threaten?"

"Yes, he did."

"Again I ask, what did he say?"

"I don't mean to say he said as he'd murder him. He was too 'cute a Cornishman to commit himself, but he looked it."

"That is no evidence."

"And he folded his arms behind his back, and clenched his fist, and set his teeth. I seed him."

"Again, that is no evidence."

"Please, sir," shouted Reuben, "I never thought to hurt Stephen; and as to the accident, Barnaby Goff knows it was so. He was there."

"Where is Barnaby Goff?"

Unhappily this man was not available as witness. He had left by the night train

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after the fatal descent, for Plymouth, to take a steamer for South Africa, where he was bound to work in the Transvaal gold-mines. He had gone down the pit that afternoon solely to fetch up his tools. This was unfortunate. An important person for giving evidence was not there.

The verdict was "Accidental death," and Reuben left without a stain on his character.

"'Stuff and nonsense! I was there.'"

Nevertheless Margery was so convinced that Stephen had been killed by him out of envy and resentment, that she proclaimed her opinion everywhere and to all who visited her shop. The result was that a strong prejudice was evoked against Treherne; then it grew and became so intense that he was shunned by his mates in the mine and was eyed askance by all in the village. The children pointed at him as he passed, and said: "There goes the murderer!"

Reuben contemptuously disregarded these indications of aversion till his situation in the place became intolerable. He lodged with a miner, and this miner's wife told him he must quit. He could find no other family that would receive him, and he was forced to leave Wheel Meor. That implied his quitting Porthvean. He did not trouble about that; there were other mines working in Cornwall, and he departed for one of these. But speedily it became known among his mates there that he was a man who had been forced to leave Wheel Meor for having murdered a comrade in a peculiarly treacherous manner, and again in his new quarters his position was made unendurable.

With grim satisfaction Margery heard tidings from time to time of Reuben, pursued by this charge, not escaping from it for long wherever he went, and not able to obtain permanent work in any mine, so evil was the report that accompanied him. At last, unable to stand against it, he left his native county, and Margery heard that he had gone to Cardiff and was in a Welsh coal-mine.

"That's the right place for such as he," said she — "among chaps as can't speak English and are as black as devils."

Reuben had a sister, an undersized, deformed girl, who was a nurse in the family of a ship's captain near Porthvean, and it was through her the news came that her brother was working as a collier. The girl vainly stood up for Reuben and protested

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his innocence. No one heeded her; all concluded that the blood of Stephen lay on his soul. Reuben sent his sister at times presents of money. He was still unmarried, and he did not venture back to Porthvean to face the public there.

A year and a half elapsed, and then ensued the crossing of the frontier by the Boers and the declaration of war. Soon after that all the Cornish miners who had been employed in the Transvaal returned to their native land, and, along with them, Barnaby Goff.

One day this man entered Margery's shop.

"What's the sense of this?" he asked. "You have been spreadin' a tale as how Reuben Treherne killed Stephen Legassick."

"I have—he did it."

"Stuff and nonsense! I was there. I saw how it all happened. Thomas Pentally came down the first stage on to the landing, and I saw that one of the beams supporting it had broken the rock in which it was set, and that a piece was coming away. I hallooed to Reuben and Stephen, as was before me, and I went back. But it was too late; a great bit of stone broke off, and down it fell past me and Reuben and hit Stephen. Reuben would have been struck as well, but he was some steps higher up the ladder. When I shouted, Stephen looked up, and in a moment the rock was on him and he went down. Reuben had no more to do with it than has my old grandmother as is bedridden."

"Why did you not stay and say so?"

"Whoever would ha' thought it were anything but a chance? If I'd had any notion that folks 'ud ha' accused poor old Reuben, I'd ha' forfeited my passage and ha' stayed for the inquest."

"Is this true?"

"Of course it is. And what ha' you done but made darned mischief?—and everyone here takes Reuben for a murderer. He was and is innocent as that there white cat is as is rubbin' herself against my legs."

"This is truth?"

"I swear it. If Reuben had been first on the ladder, he'd ha' gone to Kingdom Come, and not Stephen. It was just an accident, and no more. It must be made right with Reuben; it's a cruel, burnin' shame, it is!"

"Leave him to me," said Margery, her face on fire with vexation.

When Barnaby departed from the shop, Margery said to her cousin: "Prue! you'll mind the business whilst I'm away?"

"Where be you a-going to, Margery?"

"That's no concern o' yours."

"How long shall you be away?"

"Can't say. And Prue, whilst I be from home, no leering at the men through the window, and no flirting with them over the counter, or I'll hear of it and larrup you when I comes back."

"When are you off?"

"To once," said Margery.

Without further explanation, without great preparation, Margery quitted Porthvean, and Prue was left in sole charge.

Before going to the nearest station, which was four miles off, Margery sought out Reuben's sister and learned from her the address of her brother. That obtained, she started by train. The day was already partly spent, and Margery did not proceed further than Plymouth, where she tarried the night; but on the following morning she took a ticket by the Great Western for Cardiff.

She had done Reuben a grievous wrong. She had made his life bitter to him; had turned against him the hearts of all who knew him; had weighed him down under an unjust accusation from which he had been unable to clear himself; and she had, moreover, rendered more sad the lot of the unfortunate deformed girl, loyal to her brother, conscious of his innocence, and powerless to clear his character of a frightful imputation.

Now only did Margery perceive how groundless had been her convictions, how perverted had been her interpretation of the words and acts of the man. The delusion in which she had been, and in which she had hugged herself, was dissipated wholly, so she was as one awakened from a hideous dream.

From the moment that Margery realised her mistake she had resolved to undo the consequences as far as they affected Reuben. It was she who had blackened him, and she must whitewash him.

On reaching Cardiff she found that she was still some way from the colliery where he had taken employment, and she was over two hours in making her way to it. At last she did reach the place and was in the midst of an agglomeration of red brick cottages dingy with soot, interspersed with chapels, and there she found that in which lived the man she sought. Happily he was then at home, having come off from his work, and was engaged in washing himself with more publicity than quite comported with her Cornish ideas of propriety, but which is inevitable where habitations are small

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and crowded together, and the work is of a superlatively dirty description.

Reuben started from the wash-tub in amazement when he saw Margery before him, and stared at her, holding the soap in one hand and a scrubbing-brush in the other, and dripping from every limb.

"Reuben," said Margery, "Barnaby Goff has come back to Porthvean, and he has told all that he saw, and how that you are blameless in the matter of Stephen Legassick. I have made a great mistake. I have caused you much trouble and shame, and have put you about terrible, driving you from place to place; and when I found out that I was wrong, then at once I came on here to let you know that your character is in my eyes quite white again, and that I will do for you everything I can to publish and to proclaim that you have been falsely accused, and to take the disgrace on myself for having wronged you. And this is what I intend, Reuben. You shall finish your washing yourself all over, and dry yourself, and get into all your clothes again, and get the soap and water out of your head, and permatum it and comb it, and part it on the side and brush it, and then I'm going to take you back to Porthvean. I'll take you a third-class ticket, and you shall have a luncheon-basket, as costs three-and-six, at Exeter, that contains half a chicken and ham, and some nice lettuce, two rolls and a pat o' butter, and some cheese, a couple of biscuits, and a bottle of mineral water, for I don't hold by claret; and if that ain't enough, you shall drink as much lemonade by the way as you like, and eat sausage-rolls by the score. And, Reuben, I shall have a fly at the station from the 'Miner's Arms,' and us two shall drive into Porthvean, and I'll show to the whole place that you are an honest man, so sure as Margery Coade I was, Margery Legassick I is, and Margery Treherne I shall be."

HOMEWARD BOUND FOR CHRISTMAS IN THE COACHING DAYS.
From the picture by Fred W. Burton.

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EASY COME.

By W. PETT RIDGE.*

"BUT thanks be!" said the middle-aged man fervently, "thanks be I've put all that sort of thing away from me, and now it don't temp' me not in the least whatsoever."

The two men, one middle-aged and one young, stood outside the Shelter in Hanbury Street and watched children who came from the Board-school nearly opposite; the younger man did this without seeing them. He, a floury-jacketed lad, did not belong to the Shelter; he had been stopped on his way to Mile End Road by a request from the middle-aged man for a match, some tobacco, and a pipe.

"I look at them little kiddies," went on the middle-aged man reminiscently, "and I think of the time when I was like 'em, innercent and with no thought of crime or what not from one week's end to the other. I see meself growing up and getting me reputation as Pug Nainby, of Bethnal Green, eight stone six, with me name in the *Sporting Life* sometimes as often as twice a week, and backers ready to plank down a sovereign whenever ast so to do. I was like one of the lilies of the valley at that time."

The younger man looked at him admiringly, but with something of doubt.

"Not in regard to me appearance," he explained, "but in so far as concerned me toiling not nor spinning. Then there came a time when, owing to a generous habit of accepting drinks whenever they was offered me, I had to look about for other means of earning a living. Then it was that——"

Mr. Nainby gave it all in an even monotone which suggested that he was accustomed to reciting it in public, but to the interested young man it had all the charm of novelty, and he listened.

"If this Surbiton job had come under my notice," said Pug Nainby, lowering his voice, "at the time of which I am now speaking, I should have been on it like a bird—I regret to say. I should choose a Wednesday night, because the man that's left in charge of the 'ouse is 'alf engaged to a lady in a shop, and they'll be down on the riverside listening to the band. I should catch the seven-thirty down from Waterloo; I should take a large kit-bag with me—'Even forgive me for thinking of all this!—a kit-bag with the name of Captain Somebody painted on it, carrying it, ye see, as though it was full and heavy, and with this yer article that I 'old in my 'and at the present moment——"

The younger man's eyes became fixed on the shining key.

"This would open it as easy—ah! as easy as easy. And then—if it hadn't been that I'd found salvation—then I should have me bag filled as full as it would chock, and I should hop out at the back, catch the nine-five 'ome, that reaches Waterloo at nine-twenty-nine, and there I should be, a 'underd pounds better off than when I started. See? But unfortunately—I mean to say fortunately—I've done with little capers of that kind; I've got me future life to think of, and the good opinion of kind 'elping friends, and so forth and so on. Besides, I'm troubled with rheumatics."

"Come and have a glass," suggested the younger man eagerly but deferentially, "and let's talk the matter over."

"Not me!" said Pug Nainby; "not me! Fifteen year ago it'd be different; to-day I make answer unto you——"

"Grove Road, did you say?"

"*Don't* tell me I went and let the address slip out?"

"Grove Road, wasn't it?"

"Grove Road it was," admitted Mr. Nainby reluctantly. "But don't you go thinking any more of what I said about that seven-thirty on Wednesday night from Waterloo, and a kit-bag with a military name on it. Put all that out of your mind, for goodness' sake! I should never forgive meself if I thought that I'd been the means of starting a likely young chap on the broad path that leadeth to destruction. And you, being new to the game, would only go making a mull of it. As for this key, in order to show you how easily I can avoid temptation at my time of life, why—here it goes!"

Mr. Nainby made all the preparations for

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"'And with this yer article that I 'old in my 'and at the present moment——'"

sending the key into distant space, but somehow it fell short and went only into the middle of the road. He said "Good-night" curtly and went into the dark passage of the Shelter. Looking back, he saw that the younger man, after glancing around cautiously, went across and picked up the key, dropped it quietly into his pocket, and strolled on Mile End Road way, whistling a cheerful American march. Mr. Nainby, winking at a text, permitted his rheumatic limbs to convey him slowly upstairs, and later joined in a meeting with enthusiasm, showing signs of annoyance only when he failed in his endeavour to catch the leader's eye, and other reformed characters were called upon to recount the history of their lives and crimes. This he attributed to sheer favouritism, and in order to give some definite sign of his annoyance he sang with great determination a wrong hymn at the close of the meeting, winning over by force of voice and general energy a few undecided, newly joined comrades who were prepared to go in whatever direction they were pushed. The leader afterwards remonstrated with him gently, and Mr. Nainby retorted. He was found challenging a mild man to fight in order to settle some dispute concerning a quotation from Isaiah, and the manager, being called up, had to speak clearly; whereupon Mr. Nainby showed signs of tears and remarked pitifully that it seemed as though everybody was making a dead set against him; he threatened to give it all up and go back to his old life. On this, the whole forces of the establishment were brought to bear on Mr. Nainby, and admirable men begged him fervently to reconsider this hasty pronouncement, which Mr. Nainby, after an elaborate show of determination, hesitancy, and graceful condescension, agreed to do. He went to his leather couch that night with the feeling that he had sacrificed himself for the good of the community.

On the following Wednesday night he

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collected two shillings from his fellow lodgers on behalf of a widower with fifteen children, and took 'bus to the City, walking thence to Waterloo Station. He had borrowed a silk hat of the fashion of the early 'eighties.

"You wouldn't have me go on a mission of this kind," he had said to the owner of the silk hat, "without dressing meself up a bit."

And in the thick stream of people flowing from the City in order to snatch hasty meals at home, make a quick change into flannels, and speed to the river, Mr. Nainby looked one of the many who loaf about Walbrook and other side streets, waiting for financial miracles to happen. He took a third return, and, to escape suspicion, went at once to the very front of the train. He did not risk a glance out of the compartment, much as he was tempted, and here he found reward, for on arriving at Surbiton he caught sight, a distance off, of the floured young man of Hanbury Street, carrying with apparent difficulty a large kit-bag, marked "Capt. Charling, R.E." On the bridge a porter offered to help, but the young man declined assistance; outside the station a covey of boys came up insisting on being allowed, for the mere pleasure, to carry the bag: but they were driven off, and they retired giving imitations of the gait and the Cockney voice of the young man. "Oh! go aw'y, do!" they cried to each other; "I can kerry it meself!"

Mr. Nainby, his elderly silk hat well over his eyes, walked along on the other side of the way, affecting to read with great interest a leading article in an evening paper which he had bought on his way down. When necessary, he stopped, as though anxious to concentrate his mind more accurately on some knotty problem raised by the leader; sometimes he halted to apply a match to an imaginary cigarette; he kept always an eye on the kit-bag marked "Capt. Charling, R.E." The summer was on its return, but dusk had not yet arrived, and Mr. Nainby went into a corner public-house in Maple Road, which commanded a view of the house. There he had a long and amiable talk with the landlord on the subject of rheumatism and its various ineffective remedies, bewailing to a sympathetic ear the drawbacks that it brought to a man of active habits.

"You begin to get pains in your joints," he said dogmatically, "and you can't get in and out of winders like what you used to."

"Winders?" echoed the landlord.

"When I say winders," explained Mr. Nainby, "I speak in a general sense. What I'm trying to make you understand is, that it 'ampers you in akerabatic tricks of any kind whatever."

"Oh! that's your line," said the landlord, enlightened. "I thought I wasn't far out. Funny thing, but d'rectly you come in I said to myself: 'Hullo!' I said, 'ere's a chap that's up to something or other.'"

"And what call have you got," demanded Mr. Nainby with heat, "to jolly well think anything of the kind? Some of you licensed vitchlers seem to think you've got the earth to look after. I wonder it never occurs to you to mind your own bisness. You don't see me interfere with other people's affairs, do you? Very well, then!"

"Let's change the conversation," urged the landlord timidly. "Let's talk about something else. Do you happen to know Wormwood Scrubbs at all?"

"Loogere!" cried Mr. Nainby, with fierceness, "when I want any insults, I'll ask for 'em."

"I used to have a house up Wormwood Scrubbs way, but it never what you may call paid. Except on Saturdays."

"What on earth have I got to do with your troubles? Haven't I got enough on me mind, what with rheumatism and—and other affairs, without you coming worrying of me?"

"I only want to show politeness to a customer," urged the landlord weakly. "It's all done for the good of the 'ouse. You needn't talk to me as though I was a—I was a policeman."

Mr. Nainby started so violently at this dread word that the landlord took up a Windsor chair in self-defence. The two faced each other.

"Now, then!" cried Pug Nainby, "out with it! Make a clean breast of it. Tell us what the little game is. Speak as man to man—if you are able. Who's give me away?"

"It's a funny thing, but I was never so much misunderstood," protested the landlord, "in all me blessèd life. I don't know you any more than I know that chap over there that's going in at the gate with a kit-bag."

Mr. Nainby whirled round with a word of contempt for his own thoughtlessness, and another word of reproof to his knees. By this foolish row he had as nearly as possible missed the entrance; another second, and the Hanbury Street young man would have gone into the house between the protecting trees, unobserved by him. The

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"He had a long and amiable talk with the landlord."

sky had taken a darker shade of grey, and the young man, novice-like, had seized the first opportunity. Nainby, recognising his indebtedness to the landlord, apologised to that gentleman with great profuseness, remarking that he hoped he knew an honest man when he met one; that any remark he might have let slip in the heat of the moment should be debited to error of manner rather than fault of heart; that he would esteem it a high privilege, and one not easily to be forgotten, if the landlord would allow him to shake hands. This ceremony over, Mr. Nainby, now in the high state of content that comes to those who offend and make generous reparation, went out of the public-house, to the owner's great relief, and distributing a few temperance leaflets to children in Maple Road, headed "Stop Ere It Is Too Late," found his way to the back of the Grove Road house and waited in the increasing dusk with as much patience as he could command. His mind went back, with a touch of regret, to the time when rheumatism was unknown to him and he carried on a risky and a chequered profession alone and unaided. Mr. Nainby sighed to think that he was forced to adopt what some might think unsportsmanlike methods; but possessing a conscience that had become dulled by exposure, he had little trouble in persuading himself that he was acting for the best, in the interests of all parties.

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"It'll be a lesson to this youngster," he said paternally, "that he'll never forget. Likely as not it'll prove the making of him."

It appeared that the youngster was taking his time. Mr. Nainby became obsessed by a horrid fear that the lad might, with the daring of stupidity, have gone out with his loaded bag by the front gate, instead of obeying the suggestion; and he told himself that should this prove to be the case, there was no alternative for an honourable man but to give immediate information to the police. It would be a new character for him to play, that of "nark," and it was one to be adopted only as a last and desperate resource; but bad as it was, it would prove to the officials in Hanbury Street that his conversion was definite and complete, and the evening papers would applaud him at the expense of New Scotland Yard. Mr. Nainby had become almost reconciled in a bitter, resentful way to this possibility, when he heard near the laurel tree behind which he was hiding the fall of a heavy package, and looking round, he saw the head of the youth coming out of a small window in the scullery.

"'Want any help?' asked a voice."

"Come along, sergeant!" said Pug Nainby in an assumed gruff voice. "We'll nab him as easy as catching flies."

The youth's head disappeared. Mr. Nainby smiled at the instant success of his ruse, and going quietly down the gravelled path, he turned the kit-bag over and found the handles. It was cruelly heavy, but this, counted a drawback for the moment, was, he knew, a prospective advantage. There was the trouble of carrying it to the station; once arrived at Waterloo, only a shilling cab to a quiet shop off Blackfriars Road would be necessary.

"Want any help?" asked a voice.

"Thanks!" replied Mr. Nainby, starting affrightedly, "I can manage. Goo' night."

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"Don't go like that!" begged the misty figure that he could not make out with distinctness.

"I'm in a 'urry."

"Yes, I know," said the other, giving a harsh whistle that grated on Nainby's ears. "But I think we may as well give you a hand."

A grasp on the shoulder seemed to take Pug Nainby back to the years of his prime. He wriggled as he had done in those golden days, but the grip became more secure.

"It's a fair cop!" whimpered Mr. Nainby. "I'll come quiet. Shall I carry the bag, or will you?"

"I'll see to that, constable," said another voice—the voice of the landlord. "Funny thing! but d'rectly he came into my place I said to myself——"

"Hold him for a moment," ordered the constable, "whilst I turn my lamp on the inside of the bag. Got him?"

"Yes," said the landlord prematurely. "I mean no. Catch him! He's off! Run! Run after him and catch him! Or I will."

It was the indecision of the landlord (so the constable said afterwards) that gave Mr. Nainby his opportunity. The constable had started, when he found the landlord running with him. It then occurred to the constable (so he said) that there might be two of them in the business, and he accordingly turned and ran back in order to make sure of the kit-bag marked "Capt. Charling, R.E."; whereupon the landlord turned also and ran back with the constable. The landlord, a fortnight later, found excuse for this by pointing out that it was not unprecedented for a notable idea to occur to two great minds at once. The landlord further argued—and never ceased to argue—that he could pick the man out of a thousand, and this could not be contradicted, for his powers in this regard were never put to the test.

"It 'curred to me," said Pug Nainby to the young man as they journeyed home empty-handed by the nine-five to Waterloo, "that I might unknowingly have put ideas into your 'ead by certain remarks that I let drop."

"Well," said the white-faced young man, mopping the inside of his hat, "so you did. If I hadn't popped off out by the front door——"

"And I thinks to myself, 'Nainby,' I thinks, 'this won't do. If so be that you've been the cause of starting a youngster on the path of crime, it's you that must stop him before he gets too fur.' It cost me two-and-three to do it, and if you're a honest man, you'll pay me back the sum, with a bit over for me exes."

"Mr. Nainby," said the other fervently, "I shan't try this on again. The baking business is safer and there's more money in it. I can never thank you enough. If ever I have a chance of repaying you——"

"Make it three bob," said Mr. Nainby.

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A DOUBTFUL MOMENT.

FROM THE PICTURE BY ALFRED STRUTT.

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THE MEDICAL STUDENT.

A POCKET BURROW.

By H. J. Holmes.

Photographs by Foulsham & Banfield.

"LET'S have a pocket burrow!" suggested the Bright Member.

"A what?" asked voices.

"A pocket burrow. You know."

"We don't," said the voices.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" murmured the Bright Member. "For years have I been urging upon you fellows the necessity of being quite up to date, but it seems I am a sort of prophet crying in the wilderness. Do you read the Society journals?"

"Never!" came the fervent chorus.

"We're not quite so far gone as that!" added the Smoke-room Solomon.

"Well, you miss a lot. But to come to the point. Pocket-burrowing has become a favourite pastime in several country houses on wet mornings when bridge and ping-pong pall. The beauty of the thing is that it must be sprung upon the company quite unexpectedly."

"Look here. Suppose you describe the thing, without too much palaver?"

"That's coming. I may say the idea was created in the capacious brain-cells of yours truly a month or two ago. I hope it won't become a disease, like ping-pong."

"Don't abuse ping-pong; it's one of the finest——"

"I know. You're one of its victims, Parker. Well, I introduced the pocket burrow originally at a gathering of the Afternoon Tea Club, and the Teasers were delighted."

"Will you kindly describe this complaint of yours, whatever it is?" besought the Ever Interested.

"It's this. Every man in the room turns out his pockets on a table. The man with the oddest collection wins first prize, which consists of being privileged to send one guinea to the fund for providing breakfasts for hungry children."

"Tell us how the Teasers' affair got on," requested the Smoke-room Solomon.

THE SYSTEMATIC MAN.

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"Great success. Every man seemed thunderstruck at the quantity of stuff he had been carrying about. You know how things accumulate in one's pockets. You should have seen some of the men's faces as they gazed on the heaps of oddments.

"You can pretty well fix on a man's business, and judge his character correctly, by what his pockets contain. The fellows were so charmed with the whole thing that they proposed a vote of thanks in my favour, and sent for a photographer to secure a graphic record of each man's collection. I have a set of the pictures here.

"Here is one showing what a walking storehouse a fellow may become. It includes a clinical thermometer; a surgical knife; a

THE SLOVENLY MAN.

pocket edition of a medical work, 'The Story of Germ Life'; a box of gelatine capsules; a short-bladed pair of scissors stuck in a cork; an indiarubber band; a pipe and tobacco-pouch; some loose letters; a series of photographs on muscular development; a little money, and some other odd items."

"Medical man, of course," said one of the listeners.

"Student. Now, here's a picture for you. It represents the pocket outfit of Hemming. You know what a tidy, methodical brute he is. You should have seen how these things were lifted from the depths of his pockets. He seemed to know exactly where to find every solitary item he carried.

"The wallet he produced was without a

THE HANDY MAN WHO CARRIES EVERYTHING WITH HIM.

THE SCIENTIFIC MAN.

Google

wrinkle. That came from one pocket — nothing more. An immaculate card-case came from another; a neat gold watch and chain—the watch in a chamois cover! a sovereign-purse hung on the chain. Then a silver cigarette-case from what was evidently its regular abiding place for years. A pipe came next—snug in a leather case. A gold match-box followed; from his breast coat-pocket he extracted a silk handkerchief — all it contained; his keys were on a silver chain; after this a neat pair of scissors. From the right-hand trousers pocket he produced some silver; whilst his copper coins were extracted from the left. There's system for you!

THE DANDY.

"But here's Belfer's. Belfer is the very antithesis of Hemming. Slovenly individual. Avoid his style, my friends. Mark the loose, partly soiled visiting-cards, the broken cigarettes; keys minus a ring; a pile of crumpled letters, folded anyhow; a leaky packet of tobacco. His money came from all pockets. He produced a knife with only a single blade whole. Odds and ends included three soiled postage stamps from the uttermost depths of his waistcoat breast-pocket!

"One of the most interesting of the Teasers' pocket-burrowers was the scientific Barnard. He proved to be a sort of perambulatory Kew! His carrying

THE SMOKER.

THE HYPOCHONDRIAC.

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capacity was responsible for a four-fold steel rule, a small ivory scale; then a catalogue of scientific instruments, a chronometer and chain. These were followed up by a certificate of correct timekeeping, a sheet of paper with trigonometry calculations, a memorandum-book choke full of awful-looking signs; next came a table of logarithms, an electric switch, a handkerchief covered with chemical stains; he weighed in with a couple of brass weights, a litmus book, and three-and-sixpence in loose coins."

"Heavens, what a load!" broke in one of the listeners who hadn't strayed

THE MAN ABOUT TOWN.

away during the Bright Member's lengthy recital.

"Yes; but he had a close second in Berkeley, the dramatic critic, who, as you know, has the reputation of being a wonderfully handy creature at home and elsewhere. His little collection included a huge pocket-knife that must have weighed a couple of pounds, and bristling all over with various tools! Then there was a good-sized roll of copper wire; a stout pair of scissors, a pocket calendar, a pair of nippers, a magnifying glass, not to mention such odd trifles as a railway carriage-key, a couple of shirt-studs, several buttons, a fountain pen, a

THE SCHOOLBOY.

THE DUSTMAN

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strongly made watch, and some money. There's a pattern for you !

"You can see the dandy in every item of 'Lady' Wells' pocket turn-out ! He wasn't a bit ashamed to produce a tube of moustache wax, and a tiny comb for use on the same facial ornament ! Then he fished out a pair of nail-scissors and other manicurist's instruments ; and concluded his interesting exhibit with a couple of scented envelopes addressed in ladies' handwriting, a dainty little purse, a watch with jewelled case, and a latch-key !

"You know what a slave of the weed our old friend O'Grady, of the *Hurrah*, is ? Therefore you will not be surprised to learn that he turned out to be a somewhat erratic kind of a tobacconist's advertisement. He solemnly produced three pipes, a large case stuffed with French cigarettes, an immense case of the very finest cigars ; a pouch containing about a pound of strong tobacco ; half-a-dozen boxes of matches. He clinched this smoky mixture with a further instalment of tobacco in an unopened packet ; the latest pipe-cleaning device ; a tool for scraping pipe-bowls ; and a knife that fairly vibrated with the odour of the weed !

"Perhaps the most curious collection of all was that of Sims—the younger—who believes that he is suffering from every imaginable disease known and unknown ! What do you think of the man who carries about with him a bottle of eucalyptus, a block of camphor, a packet of court plaster, a bottle of pills, two bottles of tabloids, a packet of doctors' prescriptions, a medicine wallet, three handkerchiefs, and some cayenne pepper in a phial ? All these, mind you, in addition to the odds and ends that most men carry in their pockets ! "

"He deserves to die," murmured someone.

"*He* doesn't think so," went on the Bright Member. "But, to come again to the Teasers' pocket-burrowing show. Another very characteristic collection was made up by Thompson, who prides himself on being a typical man about town."

"What was it like ? "

"A betting-book was the first thing he laid on the table ! This was followed by a copy of the *Pink 'Un* ; a lot of old counter-foils of theatre tickets ; his cheque-book ; a gold match-box, and a card-case of the same metal ; a cigar case and cutter combined ; some ball programmes, an eye-glass, and a number of letters.

"Thompson's heap was next to that of Murdoch, who has literary ideas. His taste was illustrated by a huge pipe ; the latest

THE BUTCHER'S BOY.

French novel ; a pocket Kipling ; a Shakespearean play ; a book of poems. He added to these a pair of spectacles, a stylo pen, a note-book, a pawn-ticket, several printed "regrets" from editors of the magazines, two unreceipted bills, a couple of 'script poems, a lot of old prints, and a piece of blue pencil; besides the pocket requisites generally to be found on persons with no claim on literature ! That closed the show."

"And who won the prize ? "

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"The hypochondriac. We thought it would cheer him up a bit. Besides, his lot was the oddest of all."

"It's very interesting!"

"Very. You can get a lot of amusement out of the thing, I assure you. Do you know, I had the curiosity the other day to invite our dustman into my room for the purpose of finding out what *he* carried."

"How delightfully enthusiastic you must be!"

"Don't be sarcastic. I'm seeking knowledge, you see! Well, he calmly turned out a packet of shag tobacco, a clay pipe black with age, a stump of lead pencil, a copy of a crime paper, a box of cheap matches, fivepence in coppers—which, he delicately hinted, might be augmented at my expense—and a huge coloured handkerchief.

"Afterwards, I had two boys in for a similar purpose. One was a somewhat refined lad, and was guilty of nothing worse than a clean handkerchief, three wire puzzles, half-a-dozen glass marbles, a French dictionary, a pocket-knife, a catapult, a toy pistol, a couple of keys, a ball of string, and several brass buttons.

"The other boy was—well, he was a butcher's boy. He contained, in various holes and corners of his attire, a mass of sweets, a packet of cheap cigarettes, a bundle of tangled string, three corks, a tin whistle, a bulldog revolver, two penny dreadfuls, five shiny pebbles, a peg-top, a knife with a dagger blade, and a ha'penny in ready cash!"

"What a searcher after knowledge you are!" said the Smoke-room Solomon when the Bright Member subsided into silence at last. "But I'm afraid your new game of pocket-burrowing will scarcely suit such hardened sinners as we of the Twencentric are. You might get to know too much! Good afternoon."

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THE KING'S WAY.

By H. C. BAILEY,

Author of "My Lady of Orange."

NOW this was the way of the King: whom he trusted he trusted wholly, whereby he made for himself much danger—also of friends not a few. So with his whole heart he trusted Sir Charles of Godstow; and Sir Charles, who had better cause, was ever confident in the faith of the King. For Sir Charles knew by proof that King Edward would risk life for his sake, since on a day when the English sought vainly to storm a fastness held by the heathen Sultan Bibars, Sir Charles lay stricken beneath the very wall, and none dared come through the rain of bolts to bear him away save only the Lord Edward his master, who was afterwards his King. In memory of that day, the King trusted Sir Charles and loved him till the day he died. It is his death that makes the story.

Godstow Castle and Wytham Hall are fallen to dust long since, but in the days when Godstow battlements frowned across the river, the fat fields of Wytham lay like Naboth's vineyard before the covetous eyes of Sir Charles. The miserly blood of his Savoyard mother burnt in his veins, and her spirit bade him snatch the lands of Harold of Wytham when Harold's grave was dug in the little churchyard. Till that day it seemed to him wiser to wait, for Harold of Wytham was like to fight well for his own; but his sole heir was a maid. And now you will see how it came to pass that ere a big grave by Wytham Church was green, three men-at-arms who came riding abreast over the hills from Cumnor heard a scream and a shout and arms clash at Wytham Hall. They were John Bowlegs and Denis the Gascon, and one Bertram, who had no other name then. Then John Bowlegs clapped his mailed hand on his mailed thigh and chuckled; and Denis the Gascon laughed aloud and praised God, who sends fighting; but Bertram said only—

"That was a maid who cried," and he looked at his comrades as he spurred his horse and went on ahead.

"They all do," growled John Bowlegs, and spurred after him.

And Denis the Gascon kissed his hand to the air and took the lead, for he was the lightest man, though a very desperate fighter. Then Bertram cried: "There is one of us should tell the King." And John Bowlegs echoed him: "One of us should tell the King." And Denis the Gascon answered from the van: "Certes, one of us should tell the King."

But they galloped on. Just then they heard the maid's cry again, and true it is that Bertram, for all his weight of muscle and bone, drove his horse past the Gascon, and so came first to the courtyard of Wytham Hall, and found a little maid struggling and crying in two men's arms. She heard his thunderous gallop, for she turned her head as they dragged her away, and he saw there was blood on her face.

"Aid! aid!" she cried.

Then as he reined up hard, Bertram struck from the saddle at one of them with his clenched mailed hand, and he hit the man on the jaw, and that man did no ill afterwards. Close on his heels the Gascon came, and he, for fear of hurting the maid, struck lightly with his sword at the other man's temple, and this man reeled some paces ere he fell, so that Bertram had time to snatch the maid. Denis the Gascon bowed to him as he fell, and he looked at the maid in Bertram's arms and curled his moustache.

"Afterwards we will tell the King," said he.

In that courtyard was a sight that gladdened the heart of Denis. Ill-armed, two young men fought with six. The maid's brown hair lay on Bertram's dusty mail, his big arm compassed her; and still the two strove to reach the maid, knowing naught of Bertram nor Denis, nor whence nor why they had come. So the fight was set in the courtyard when John Bowlegs came up; and he glanced once round and said: "Two to six!" and dropped his vizor and drew his sword.

Ere he came the maid had sobbed in Bertram's ear: "My cousins are they! Aid them, for the Virgin's sake!"

So as John Bowlegs came heavily to the ground, Bertram let go the girl and bowed

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to her, and he turned to Denis, who was cheering the strokes.

"Gentlemen of the King's House!" he cried; and Denis and John saluted him and each other, and he them and the maid. Then down on that unfair fight came a little phalanx of men who knew how fights should be fought. The point of that phalanx was Bertram, and the wings of it were Denis and John. But at the cry of "The King's House!" the gallant six fell back a little, for they knew how that cry had won starker fights than this. From the hillside came an answering cry. But the two lads, her cousins, on the instant that they were freed from the brunt of the fight, turned together to the maid. And between them and the brave six came Denis and Bertram and John, and the six fell back hastily out of sword reach, stumbling together like pigs to the trough.

"Bah!" said John Bowlegs. "Ye swine!" said John Bowlegs; for he loved a fight. And Denis the Gascon broke from his place and ran at them, and they scattered and fled all ways, and Bertram stood still and laughed at them and the Gascon's wasted blows. Then John Bowlegs slammed his sword clashing home to its scabbard.

"Truly they be swine," said John Bowlegs; for he had not struck one blow.

Down the hillside came the King's array, riding straight for the noise of the fight. That was the way of the King. Back came the Gascon, panting and swearing in foreign tongues. Suddenly the courtyard rang with the scream of the maid; and Bertram turned and saw that one of her cousins was fallen to the ground at her feet. A cough racked him, and there was blood on his lips; the sunlight fell on dark blood that oozed from under his corselet. When Bertram came to him, his brother knelt by one side and the maid on the other, and she

"As he reined up hard, Bertram struck from the saddle at one of them with his clenched mailed hand."

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lifted his head and wiped the blood from his mouth.

"Harold!" she sobbed; and Harold looked up at her tears, and he smiled and feebly laid his hand on hers. Bertram loosed his corselet, and John Bowlegs came waddling and thrust him aside, for John had much skill in wounds. And John saw bubbles in the blood, and he said gruffly: "He is sped."

Then the maid cried out, and Bertram put out an arm to steady her as she swayed. But a harsh voice sounded through her cry—

"Who are ye, my masters?"

It was a man, swarthy, and tall, and thin. He held in his hand a parchment. As he looked at the dying man he grinned. "Eh! vixen, art happy now?" said he. Then Arthur, the other cousin, sprang to his feet. But Bertram's hand fell on the stranger's shoulder, and the stranger walked backwards a little way. Bertram's eyes blazed at his. Bertram's face was very close, as he said—

"Pray speak to me as you spoke to the lady."

Denis the Gascon tapped the stranger's arm.

"Or to me," he said, and he smiled. The stranger laughed.

"Ye fools! I am Sir Charles of Godstow," and he looked at his golden spurs and grinned in Bertram's face. "I fight with my peers, ye knaves!"

"Show him the sty, Bertram," said Denis the Gascon.

And now the King's array was marching in. The King rode at the head of all, with Robert Burnell, the Chancellor, and Henry Lacy, the Earl of Lincoln, a little behind him. The King reined up his horse and glanced round. He saw a man lying in his own blood, gasping out his life in a girl's arms. He saw two other men stretched stark; and then his angry eye lit on Bertram.

"Bertram!" he cried fiercely, "what knave's deed is this?"

Bertram bowed low.

"The maid was affrighted. She cried for aid, my lord."

Then Sir Charles came quickly to the King, and he fell on his knee.

"My dear lord," he said sweetly, "these brawling knaves set on my men—would have smitten me had they dared. I fear three men's lives must pay for their knavery. Here was peace till they came, my lord." And he took the King's hand and kissed it. But Bertram cried sharply—

"Such peace as that tells, my lord," and he pointed to the dying man.

Denis the Gascon laid his hand on the maid's torn dress.

"Such peace as this tells, my lord," said he.

John Bowlegs waddled forward.

"Six upon two, my lord," said he.

Then there was silence, for Sir Charles found nought to say at once, and all men heard Harold mutter faintly—

"Arthur! Arthur!"

Then, as Arthur bent over to hear, Sir Charles began to speak.

"My lord, she is ward of mine——" But the King was leaning forward in his saddle to hear and see, and he held up his hand for silence.

"You loved her, Arthur," Harold whispered; "you—loved her. I—I—did not—did not—did not," and he smiled and looked up into Joan's wet eyes. Then suddenly a great sob broke from him and he fell back. For a moment he lay still in her arms, and then she caught him to her breast and cried to him, but he answered no more. She sobbed over him, and no man spoke for awhile. At last the King turned in the saddle and signed to his men.

"Bear him in," he said in a low voice; and he walked his horse slowly forward and tapped Arthur on the shoulder. "See you to your lady, sir," he said. So Joan of Wytham came back to her home. When they were all gone in, the King said—

"Now I will hear you, Charles; and if wrong hath been done——" He stopped, and his eye fell on Bertram. He trusted Sir Charles.

"Three days ago, my lord, Harold of Wytham died, and he left no child but this maid Joan. Now, Wytham is in my lordship, and this maid Joan is ward of mine. This morning I rode with my men to bring her honourably to Godstow. Fairly and peaceably she was going when these knaves came riding by, swore she was too pretty a maid to waste, set on my men; and these hotheads her cousins, who coveted lands and lady, struck in, hoping the brawl might end well. In good time, my lord, you have come. Would that you had come sooner!" He looked up at the King and sighed. "Two good men of mine lie dead, and this hothead cousin hath fared ill."

The King's eyes were blazing; his face was flushed with anger.

"*Mort de ma vie!*" he swore. "I hope you are scathless, Charles."

"Of all save insults," said Sir Charles

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smoothly. "I thank you, my dear lord. I am too big a bird for these hawks to strike."

Now it happened that the Earl of Lincoln knew Bertram well, and he whispered in the Chancellor's ear: "My lord, it is in my mind that I do not trust Sir Charles."

But Robert Burnell the Chancellor was frowning heavily, and he stared at Sir Charles and said nothing.

"Where is the marshal?" cried the King. "*Mort de ma vie!* Why do you tarry? Stand out, ye scoundrelly knaves! Would you shame my arms so?"

Bertram and Denis and John Bowlegs took stand in a line before the King, and they looked the King in the eye.

"We, too, have a tale to tell, my lord," said Bertram. "Ours is true."

The King broke out upon him: "By the Rood! shall he give my friend the lie before my face? Take their arms and bind them, marshal!" He trusted Sir Charles.

Then Robert Burnell the Chancellor, who trusted nought save God and the King and himself, muttered softly so that only the King should hear: "Aye, bind them quick and hang them unheard."

The King flushed darker.

"My lord!" he cried angrily; but he saw the Chancellor's grey eyes steady and cold. "Art right, Robert," said he, and he waved his hand for Robert Burnell to speak. Then the Chancellor, who never did that which men counted on, turned sharply to the three.

"Ye knaves! how dare ye gainsay what Sir Charles hath seen?" he cried. His head was turned towards Bertram, but his eyes were looking askance: he watched Sir Charles. Now Sir Charles had held one hand behind him from the first. "Shall the King's men do wanton wrong on his friend's ward?"

"What Sir Charles saw, my lord, we do not gainsay," said Bertram; and Sir Charles broke in quickly—

"I said not that I had seen, my lord. I was within the house, else there had been no brawling here." And before them all, the King and his lords, John Bowlegs laughed aloud. The King thundered—

"Silence, knave!"

The Chancellor spoke very quietly and slowly, so that each word sounded alone: "You did say she was your ward," and now the cold eyes were turned full upon Sir Charles. Sir Charles bowed, and still he kept one hand behind him. Then suddenly, in another tone, sharp and quick as a thrust, came a question—

"Art as sure of that as of what you did not see?"

Sir Charles's jaw quivered. The Chancellor stretched out his arm, his long forefinger pointed straight.

"That parchment," said he.

Sir Charles started forward and fell on his knee by the King's side, for he knew that the King trusted him; thereat Robert Burnell said something in the ear of the Earl of Lincoln, and the Earl dismounted and walked up to the two men that Bertram and Denis had slain, and he bent over them. Sir Charles looked pitifully at the King.

"My dear lord, am I to be treated so?" he said. "Am I to be questioned like a thief on his trial?"

"A thief!" cried Robert Burnell. "Who uses that word?"

"There shall be nought but justice, Charles," said the King. Sir Charles sprang to his feet, and his eyes flashed at the King, and he glanced round him quickly, and his lips moved.

"That parchment," said Robert Burnell.

"'Tis a deed of mine own," Sir Charles muttered.

"Therefore 'twas kept at Wytham Hall; therefore you went in to seek it while the maid went fairly and peaceably with your men; therefore I may not see it! That parchment!" said Robert Burnell.

He held out his hand for it; but Sir Charles stood still and looked from him to the King, and his face was dark with hate, and he muttered to himself.

The Earl of Lincoln came back, and his spurs clanged in the silence. "Sir, and my Lord Chancellor, they two have died of no sharp stroke in a fight. In the hand of one is a piece of the maid's dress, in the hand of the other a golden bracelet."

"Fairly and peaceably she was going," said the Chancellor. "That parchment!"

Sir Charles drew back as if he would flee. The Earl of Lincoln stopped him, and half by force he took the parchment from behind Sir Charles and gave it to Robert Burnell. The Chancellor unfolded it, but ere he read it he looked at Bertram.

"Speak," said he.

Bertram stepped forward and saluted.

"Sir, we heard a maid cry this morning; and because it is the way of the King's House, we rode to her aid. We found this maid whom you have seen, dragged by two men. They lie there. Also we found six

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"So they waited while the Chancellor read the parchment."

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men set upon the two cousins whom you have seen. When we joined the fight, the six ran. Then came this knight and jeered at the maid, and we bade him hold his peace. Sir, that is all," said Bertram, and saluted and fell back. Denis, saluting, took his place.

"Sir, a maid misused," said Denis, and fell back in like manner. In like manner came John Bowlegs.

"Sir, six upon two," said he.

The King looked at Sir Charles, and his brow was heavy. He waited for Sir Charles to answer; but Sir Charles knew that answer there was none to make, and he would not look at the King. And the King was puzzled, for even yet he trusted the man he had saved. So they waited while the Chancellor read the parchment. At last he folded it and laid it inside his cloak. He looked at Sir Charles.

"Ah!" he said. And then he turned to the King. "Sir, now do I see why Sir Charles spoke of thieves. Now do I see why he was loth to give me this parchment. Wytham Manor is a fief from the Crown. Sir Charles hath lordship here no more than yon men-at-arms. This deed is the Crown's grant to Harold of Wytham and his heirs for ever. Thereto is set your seal, sir, and my name. Now we may know why Sir Charles left his men to fight alone—there was much need to find this parchment." And Robert Burnell paused and he smiled. "So 'tis found, Sir Charles," said he, and he tapped his cloak where the parchment lay.

As he ended, the King gave a sudden sharp sigh, and without a glance at Sir Charles he urged his horse forward to the three.

"Gentlemen, I have done you wrong," he said aloud, and he held out to them his bare hand; and he would not have them kiss it, but gripped hard on each man's fingers, and looked each frankly in the eye. That hour was never forgotten by Edward the King or the three who were then but men-at-arms. When the King turned from them, he saw that Sir Charles had fallen to his knees on the other side, and Sir Charles stretched out his hands.

"My lord the King, I have done wrong," said he. "Yet, oh, my lord! by the Virgin and the Holy Sepulchre, I swear that I knew it not. I deemed the maid was lawful ward of mine. Of the parchment I knew nought. I pray you, by our old friendship, my lord, do me no ill!"

The King looked coldly down. "What do you ask?" he said.

"Do not rob me of the wardship, my lord——" A sulphurous oath broke from the Earl of Lincoln, and Robert Burnell began to smile. The King frowned, and Sir Charles went glibly on, for he loved the fat Wytham lands far better than his honour or his soul.

"In the old days Wytham was under the Godstow lordship, my lord. Rob me not of my old rights because my men who are dead were knaves."

He caught at the King's hand. "My lord, for our friendship's sake and the war with Bibars," he whispered.

"You ask me to break my pledged word," said the King coldly. "Have you not heard the deed?"

"Ah, sir! you do not trust me!" Sir Charles sighed.

"Trust you? Yes!" cried the King. "Else I should not believe that you thought the wardship yours, and very ill had you fared for this day's ill work."

"But you will not grant me the wardship, my lord?"

"*Mort de ma vie!* No!" the King thundered. "Be glad that you do not suffer for your men's deeds!"

Then Sir Charles sprang to his feet and looked sullenly at the King and said no word of thanks. While the King took order for the guarding of Wytham Hall, he stood still and silent alone, and ever he eyed the King viciously like a dog that fears to spring. But at last, when all was done, he came forward and fell on his knee again.

"Sir, I pray your pardon," he muttered, and the King gave his hand at once, for he loved not to be angry with his friends. "I thank you, my dear lord," said Sir Charles, and kissed it rapturously. "I pray you, my lord, give me a sign of it. Rest this night at my house at Godstow."

"Gladly, Charles," said the King.

As they rode on, Sir Charles was placed at the King's left hand, and when they met Queen Eleanor, who tarried with her company on the hillside, the King and the Queen talked to him gaily as to an old friend new found. But Sir Charles was something distraught. So they rode on to the great castle at Godstow, and over the drawbridge and in.

It was on the drawbridge that Denis said to Bertram: "By the black devil! but I think this place would have been ill for the health of the maid," and he looked up at the battlements and down to the moat, and pointed down and made a noise in his throat like a splash. But Bertram said nothing.

The Earl of Lincoln rode by the

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Chancellor's side, and as they passed the portcullis he looked back at the array.

"We be many, my lord," said he; and then he turned and looked the Chancellor in the face. "Very many, my lord," said he. But Robert Burnell said nothing.

They were feasted royally in Godstow Hall, and Sir Charles would have served the King and Queen on bended knee if they had suffered him. But the King made him sit at the board, and pledged him and joked with him. Robert Burnell watched him, and in the midst of the feast he leant across to the captain of the King's House and said in a low voice: "Who guards the King, Sir Stephen?"

Now Sir Stephen was a man of wit, and so he chuckled as he put his wine-cup down. "Bertram and Denis and John Bowlegs," said he. Whereat the Chancellor laughed aloud.

While still the company stayed in the hall the three came marching to the King's chamber, for it was an order to the King's House that the three on the night guard should search the chamber. Sir Charles's chamberlain flung open the door, and he held his lamp high.

"Gentlemen, the royal chamber and the royal bed," said he.

"Ah!" said Denis.

"Oh!" said John.

And Denis ran his sword along under the bed, and John swept his sword round behind the tapestry, and they looked at each other and shook their heads. But Bertram was kicking the fire into a blaze.

"There was no need of the King, for Sir Charles lay in the grip of a stronger man than he."

"Aught in the chimney, Bertram?" said John Bowlegs solemnly. His jokes were of this kind. The logs were burning brightly and the room was light. Carefully the three went round, opening cupboards and sounding the great stone walls behind the tapestry.

The chamberlain waited patiently. "Are ye content, gentlemen?"

Then Denis and John turned to Bertram, for he was senior in the troop, though younger in years.

But Bertram was looking out of the win-

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dow, and he said without turning: "This wall is thick," and he swung sharp on his heel and stared down at the chamberlain. "This wall is very thick," said he.

"For safety, sir," said the chamberlain. "We have the thickest walls in the shire. The castle was built in King Stephen's day, when there was need of strong walls and strong arms behind them."

Bertram made his sword-hilt ring along the wall, and as he did it he watched the chamberlain; but the wall answered stoutly and the chamberlain only looked amazed.

"I am content," said Bertram.

So the chamberlain went away, and in due season came the Queen, and after her a little the King, and each had a kindly word for the men on guard. Then, as the order was, Denis and John went each one way of the corridor, and Bertram was left in the anteroom alone. But then, as no order ever bade, quickly and silently he did doff his mail and stood barefoot in jerkin and hose, with the great muscles swelling out. By the door he crouched, and he put his ear to the keyhole and waited. At last he heard the steady breath of sleep; and then silently he opened the door and silently he stole in. Like a cat he walked, for all his ten score pounds of weight. On one knee he knelt in the dark shadow by the fire, on one knee ready to spring. He heard the owls hoot in the darkness without; he heard the King murmur his wife's name as he slept. Silently he moved from one knee to the other, and the castle clock chimed eleven, and all was still again. Then on a sudden the wall creaked. On a sudden a faint ray of light came through the wall. The great wall gaped. Through it there came a man with a lamp; he shaded the light with his hand, and in that hand a dagger shone. He paused, listening an instant, then crept to the bedside. His hand was on high to strike.

Up leapt Bertram, and sprang at him and caught that hand, right hand in his left. Crashing, the lamp fell to the ground, and Queen Eleanor woke, crying: "Edward!" Her white arms were flung out in the darkness to save him.

But there was no need of her, for Sir Charles of Godstow lay in the grip of a man; and there was no need of the King, for Sir Charles lay in the grip of a stronger man than he. The King woke at her cry, and sprang up and caught a blazing brand from the fire and held it on high for light.

Sir Charles was borne out backwards by the way he came, struggling silently, for he had no breath to cry, so fierce was the right-hand grip at his throat. Back through the wall they went and out to the secret stair, and the King came after, holding his torch aloft. When he was come to the stairway out of the Queen's sight, Bertram leant his weight forward and caught Sir Charles on his knee, and back he bore the rogue's neck, all his strength at work. As he lay there writhing very nigh to death, Sir Charles looked to the King, and his starting eyes asked for mercy; but the King made no sign. Breathing hard, Bertram drove his head back further, and in the last agony Sir Charles wrenched his dagger free and struck at Bertram's heart and smote his arm. The next instant he fell back gasping as Bertram loosed him and flung him away. His back was broken, and he writhed a moment and died.

Bertram turned panting to the King, and had no breath nor knew what to say. His jerkin was torn from him. The great chest muscles rose and fell; the knotted strength of his back fell quivering to rest. And the King, it may be, knew not what to say either, for he took Bertram by the arm and led him all hot from the fight back to the Queen, who waited, anxious and beautiful in her white gown.

"Lady, will you thank him for your life and mine?"

Bertram crossed his arms on his bare breast and was much ashamed. There in his arm, fixed in the great ball of muscle, was the dagger of Sir Charles. And Bertram said, panting: "Lady—pray your pardon—would have kept him out—if I had known—how he was coming in."

The King and Queen laughed together, as they laugh who are freed on a sudden from a terrible, anxious hour.

"May I bind your wound, Bertram?" said the Queen.

So the King ceased to trust Sir Charles of Godstow; so he came to trust Bertram; so Bertram became the King's squire; and so he got from Queen Eleanor a wonderful shirt of mail.

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THE REMARKABLE TOMBSTONES OF MILAN.

By S. L. Bensusan.

Photographs by E. Brogi, Milan.

THERE is little of old Lombardy in Milan; the *cognoscenti* sneer at the town's wonderful cathedral and revile the restorations by night and by day. The clean, bustling streets, served by electric tramways, are deemed inferior to the garbage-strewn waterways of over-praised Venice; the outward seeming of an essentially modern life appears to give offence to all visitors afflicted with culture. On this account I plead guilty to a keen liking for Milan with fear and trembling, conscious of the bad taste, hopeful that it may be excused. The city is clean, bright, and busy, there is sufficient suggestion of Italy to keep away recollections of Paris or Brussels, there is amusement in plenty, the great lakes Como, Lugano, and Maggiore are within short distance, and Switzerland, France, and the Riviera within comparatively easy reach. The season at La Scala suffices all but the very hypercritical lovers of music, the life of the *cafés* is pleasant and popular. The artist and the lover of fine painting and sculpture are well served, though the art treasures are not concentrated, as in Florence, and outside the Brera there is nothing to compare with the Uffizzi or the Pitti Palace. Aurelio and Bernardino Luini with Balduccio would make Milan remarkable in any age, even though Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper" had found another resting-place. Perhaps Milan has been too busy and too excited in the past few years to dispose of her treasures to the best advantage; perhaps the majority of the visitors are content with the Cathedral, the S. Maria delle Grazie, and the Scala. Certainly one needs industry, perseverance, and ample time to see all the town has to show, to discover some rare Old Master in an obscure church, or a picture gallery hidden away on the upper floor of a public library. Few days' search will fail to yield good results, and in Milan you can walk about without finding half-a-dozen disreputable guides waiting for you in

STATUE REPRESENTING CHRIST CLEANSING THE TEMPLE.

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every great thoroughfare as in Florence and Venice. Electric trams are terribly modern, no doubt, but they take you a long way for a few pence, and sometimes the sight at the journey's end is well worth seeing. The cemetery whose wonderful appearance calls for these lines was seen almost by accident. A few idle hours upon a sunny day, a sudden descent upon the first tram that passed towards the country, a ticket to the terminus, and I found myself wondering whether Italian affection was to be measured by the devotion that made the silent God's acre in the Lombardy plain something for all men to wonder at. It was easy to reach and almost impossible to leave.

I have seen the strange graves by which the Syrian women bewail their dead beyond the garden-girt walls of Damascus, and the simple crosses set in sand that mark the spot where Englishmen fell fighting Dervishes by the banks of old Nile; I have spent hours in the desolate "House of Life" of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews in dreary Mile End, admired the beautiful grave of William the Silent, in Delft, the monuments that some of the greatest sculptors have raised in different European cathedrals, the pyramids of the Egyptian kings, the catacombs of Sicily, the cypress cemeteries of Constantinople, the wonders of the Père-la-Chaise. No

A LANTERN OF HOPE.

MONUMENT TO A LITTLE GIRL.

place wherein dust returns to dust is more remarkable than this Campo Santo of Milan. Only the Père-la-Chaise excels this Milanese cemetery, and does so by reason of its size and the innumerable statues. From the standpoint of sentiment and deep feeling that has aimed at perpetuating the remembrance of the dead in manner modest yet magnificent, the cemetery at Milan is more remarkable than the Père-la-Chaise. In the latter the dominant idea is of a nation honouring its noble dead, in the former a city soberly laments the passing of the well-beloved. In Paris the sentiment seems to vary, the great cemetery has thousands of statues and dozens of moods. In Milan, while you count the

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statues by the hundreds, the mood does not appear to change.

Light has no small part to play in bringing about the absolutely new sensation experienced by the visitor. Paris cannot boast such a generous sunlight as falls to the lot of Milan ; and whether the season be winter or summer, Lombardy rejoices in strong, white light and clear, bright air. Objects dazzling in the sun are well defined even at dawn or sundown ; and, moreover, there is a striking contrast between the white marble and the dark cypresses of the cemetery. West and East meet there, for the statuary in its modern phase is quite Western, and the cypress is dear to the Turk, who plants one by the grave of his relative, until nearly every cypress wood in the Turkish Empire is keeping guard over the forgotten dead. The effect of marble and cypress is striking.

TWO STRIKING SCULPTURES.

Light and darkness, art and nature, old time and new, are brought into contrast so effective that the observer is content to forget the few efforts of the sculptor wherein zeal has outrun discretion, and to refrain from noticing that the level of excellence is a variable one.

Certainly the sculptors have had beautiful themes, though few. The love of a husband for a wife or of a wife for a husband, of a parent for a child or a child for a parent, here and there the sad tribute of brother to sister or of friend to friend—these are the sources of inspiration; the mood of mourner or sculptor has done the rest, often with a chaste

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and delicate fancy. Faith, hope, and staunch belief in the soul's immortality are so pronounced that the elegies and threnodies woven in marble are often less sad than the tall, dark cypress trees that sway slowly in the breeze of a late afternoon, nodding and whispering one to the other, as though imparting or discussing some secret of the mystery of Life and Death spoken by the wind in its travels from distant lands across the plain. At the same time there is less fulsome eulogy than is usually encountered in cemeteries of the West, and, so far as the marble is concerned, less unnecessary and unconvincing insistence upon the many virtues of the dead.

A WIDOW'S MONUMENT TO HER HUSBAND.

Perhaps the dignity and distinction of the Campo Santo are less to be wondered at upon reflection. Italy has produced some of the world's finest sculpture, and, as every traveller or student of our own museums must know, tombs and statues in honour of the dead always constituted a great part of an artist's work. Michael Angelo, Donatello, Luca della

MONUMENT TO THE ARCHITECT, MENGONI.

Robia, Balduccio, Pisanello, and Canova all did great work of the kind. Some can be seen in Milan. A magnificent shrine by Balduccio is in the church of S. Eustorgius, and the same sculptor created the famous tomb of Azzo Visconti. Close to Milan in the Certosa is the renowned tomb of Lorenzo Acciaoli, while Rome, Florence, and Venice hold the monuments of Canova, who may almost be considered to have belonged to the nineteenth century. In the old days, when few men laboured at the arts, and, being under patronage, had nothing to win and much to lose by hasty work, monuments and elaborate tombs were works over which great sculptors spent patient years. Nowadays we have fewer patrons and no artists content to sit at their feet, so the memory of the departed must be less elaborately pre-

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GIUSEPPE NEGRI'S TOMB.

THE CASTIGLIONI TOMB.

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MONUMENT TO THE SCULPTOR, TANTARDINI: HIS OWN LAST WORK.

served. None the less, many of the monuments are of high artistic worth, and will endure through generations, unless the Campo Santo shares the fate of the Père-la-Chaise and becomes the scene of civil strife. The fight in the famous cemetery of Paris in the days of the Commune might yet find some counterpart in Milan, for one day, when I was looking over the town from the summit of the Cathedral, an Italian gentleman told me that in the terrible salt riots of a year or two ago the soldiers occupied the flat roof immediately beneath us, and never left the strange quarters until their comrades below had killed or dispersed the rioters. If the Cathedral is not free from liability to be the scene of fighting, no cemetery can hope to be; but Time, unaided by War, will spend many years in the task of destroying the memory of the sleepers in the Campo Santo of Milan.

Perhaps the sentiment that inspired the efforts of mourners would avail in times of strife to keep the Campo Santo free from strife, for it is pleasantly noticeable that affection did not consider the last tribute paid when the marble stood in its place and the trees were planted. On Sunday afternoons the friends and relatives of many of the dead devote their short holiday to the honour of the departed. You see visitors by the score, some coming on foot from the country, or by the trams from the town; others arriving in carriages heavily blazoned with the arms of some family that made history in days when Italy was the hub of

THE MACCIA FAMILY TOMB

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the universe. They come with fresh flowers and memorial wreaths, some the elaborate work of cunning city artificers, others the simple tribute that the fields have yielded. Faded flowers are taken away, fresh ones replace them; a few prayers are said with the abandonment to devotion that belongs so essentially to Southern Europe; and then one sees the mourners promenading quietly through the grounds and over the well-kept paths, listening to the birds, that know they may sing in safety in the Campo Santo. Italy is not a great country for song birds, they are destroyed for food all too often; but they know that the "sportsman" is not abroad among the tombs, and they testify their gratitude in a manner that removes not a little of the reproach of melancholy from the place. The casual visitor feels a keen sympathy with these people of high hope and simple faith, who are full of a love and reverence that defies death; he manages to observe all that goes on around him without appearing too curious, to explore the recesses of the place without showing that he has no special object in his search, and he goes away filled with a respect for the people and a renewed consciousness that Italy is still one of the world's most fascinating countries.

GIUSEPPE POGGI.

THE CASATI FAMILY TOMB.

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BLIND.

By FRED M. WHITE.*

A POOL of light fell upon the table from rose-tinted lamps half hidden in a mass of flowers and foliage—blood-red chrysanthemums and chestnut leaves. The rest of the room lay in ruddy shadow picked out here and there with a plate or a picture. One great carved bookcase had a suggestion of sombre life in its bold panels. In one corner stood an oak cabinet, and on it another shaded lamp glinting upon a magnificent hawthorn-blue jar and a small, deeply framed gem of Millet's. But for the shades, the electric light would have been garish, *bizarre*, out of place, a false note amidst surroundings almost mediæval.

Under the small lamp, with his feet against one of the big brass dogs in a deep Cromwellian oak chair, the owner of Barsac Castle sat. A young man in the prime and vigour of youth, a man with clear-cut, resolute face, yet so pale that his black moustache looked vivid against his fine-grained skin. A powerful face, yet overcast with an expression of deepest sorrow, tempered ever and again by a suggestion of passionate self-pity. You can see the same look on the face of a soldier who has lost a limb, or a statesman in the hour of defeat. And when you looked again and saw those strong, sinewy hands feeling for something along the table, you knew that Count Ferdinand Barsac was blind. And you knew also in some subtle way that the affliction was of comparatively recent date, and that the strong man still fought passionately and rebelliously against the decree of Fate.

He looked swiftly towards the door as the curtains fell back and a servant entered. Barsac's face changed as if a mask had suddenly fallen over it.

"Well, Werther?" he asked, in the mingled tone of geniality and command generally assumed towards a confidential servant. "You are really getting too audacious. Don't you know that I am never to be disturbed after dinner? What is it? A pressing telegram or something of that kind?"

"A messenger from the Court of Queen Hilda, my lord," Werther replied. "He is charged with a message from the Queen herself."

"And is bound to deliver it in person," a muffled voice came from the door. "Werther, you may go. Upon my word, Count, you have magnificent quarters here. What would I not give for such artistic surroundings as these? Rubens, Rembrandt, Titian, Benvenuto, Cellini—all the treasures of all the ages, and the electric light to give it the one modern touch. It is a perfect dream of beauty."

Barsac made no reply for the moment. His face was all broken up and quivering with the lines of an ill-suppressed passion, as the ice on a river breaks up when the Spring comes. He rose to his feet and touched the dream of shaded light and high-piled floral beauty on the table.

"Brother virtuoso," he said at length. He spoke with deep, sarcastic note. "Here is a red flower, and here is a chestnut frond with five leaves. Behind you is a blue vase for which Valeria Barsac sold the honour of our house. I can name everything as it stands; I can see every flower and leaf arranged still as they were the last time I looked upon them. Heavens! Am I and my services to the kingdom of Farsala so soon forgotten that even the *flâneurs* about the Court are ignorant of my great affliction?"

The new-comer crossed the room and touched Barsac affectionately on the shoulder.

"My dear Ferdinand," he said, "your services and your misfortunes will never be forgotten by the Queen. Have you quite forgotten your old friend De Mormay?"

"De Mormay!" Barsac cried. "Well, I suppose I must make an exception in your favour, though you did find your way here by means of a trick. For five years I have denied myself to everybody, though I am

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but four miles from the capital. How your voice brings back the old times to me! Sit down, Antony. There are cigars on the table."

"Thanks, but I see no signs of your own cigar."

"I have given up tobacco. Most blind men do in time. There is no solace in a cigar unless you can see the smoke rising. All is well at the Court?"

"All is confoundedly ill at the Court!" De Mormay replied, as he pulled a chair up to the fire and lighted his cigar. "When I said I came with a message from the Queen, I stated no more than the truth. Often as I have longed to see you, my dear Ferdinand, I have ever respected your wish to be left strictly alone. Five years ago you went to Paris, one of the most envied men in Europe. You were young, rich, and handsome. Off your own bat you had scored the consolidation of Farsala and placed our beautiful young Queen securely on the throne. Then we heard suddenly that you had come home and that you had transformed yourself into a recluse of the deepest dye. You had lost your eyesight owing to an accident——"

Barsac rose to his feet, his face quivering with passion, self-pity, scorn.

"It was no accident," he said hoarsely. He paced the room with assured strides, his nervous fingers touched objects with the same assurance that one with sight had done. "It was the work of a vile scoundrel whom I trusted. There was a woman in it—'a rag and bone and a hank of hair,' as Kipling sings! Oh! it was no accident."

"A duel, perhaps?" De Mormay said. "No man could deliberately——"

"But I tell you he did. I found the scoundrel out; I could have exposed him. He discovered what I knew, and he took this diabolical means to render me helpless. But I am not going to speak of that—the story must ever be my own. I am lord of my own castle here, De Mormay, the last bit of the old feudalism in up-to-date Farsala. Some day my servants will find that man—they are looking for him everywhere. And when they do find him, he will be lured here and I shall have my revenge."

Barsac was speaking slowly now and lingering on his words. To watchful De Mormay there seemed to be a touch of melodrama in the situation. He could see those sightless eyes upturned, the hard vengefulness of the face, the grim determination of the lips. The surroundings were all in keeping, too—the dark walls, the oak panels, the feeling of strength and security. And four miles away the people were laughing in the theatres and screaming over music-hall stars. Without question, Barsac's wrongs had injured brain as well as sight.

"But that is all by the way," the Count resumed more quietly. "I am still deeply interested in politics. My faithful Werther keeps me well posted. The Queen will have to get rid of Rustmann. That fellow is in the pay of Russia. Still, so long as you keep strictly to the letter of my Deed of Convention, Farsala is safe and the Ural mines will ever replenish the exchequer. It was the finest thing I ever did."

De Mormay drew his chair up a little closer.

"It was the Convention I came to consult you about," he said. "Russia is making trouble, and Rustmann is backing her up. Russia claims the right of pre-emption in the mines under Clause V. This will touch Queen Hilda's private fortune also."

"My dear fellow, there was no right of pre-emption at all. I was particularly careful on that point. Clause V. was devoted to the Jewish poll-tax basis. There is one thing I pride myself upon, and that is my memory. I could repeat the Convention by heart."

De Mormay's gay face clouded slightly. From his breast-pocket he produced a large sheet of parchment and laid it on the table.

"That is very strange," he said. "Here is Clause V. set out exactly as Russia claims it. Let me read it to you. . . . What do you think of that, my friend? And yet you were so painfully careful that you wrote every word of this document yourself. It will be exceedingly hard for Farsala. What do you think?"

"I think," Barsac replied, "that the whole thing is a clever and audacious forgery. The parchment has been stolen and tampered with. By some ingenious means the least important clause in the agreement has been removed and this vital paragraph inserted. De Mormay, I have often longed passionately for my eyesight, but never as I long for it now. Unless some miracle gives me back my eyes, Farsala is helpless."

Barsac strode up and down the room impatiently. He shivered as with cold. He took a couple of logs from the basket and tossed them on the fire easily as a man possessed of sight would have done. De Mormay watched him curiously.

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"The enemy had counted upon this," he said. "Our chief, our only witness, is as useless as a dead man. Could you but see, you could refute the forgery. The Russian minister told me somewhat cynically that if you could give legal testimony, he would have nothing further to say. Your eyes are not destroyed, Ferdinand?"

"No, it is paralysis of the optic nerve. A tiny thing, and yet so great. Specialists say that some day a ridiculously easy cure will be found."

"My dear fellow, it *is* found. I have the man who guarantees to cure you."

Barsac paused in his impatient strides. "Who is this man?"

"A brilliant mystery. He came to the capital a year ago, since when he has performed some wonderful cures. He makes a huge income, lives in the most extravagant style, and for amusement goes in for political intrigue. This Jasper Manton is especially great upon eye troubles. A friend of mine who had lost his sight owing to paralysis consulted Manton, and to-day he can see as well as I can. When the difficulty over the Convention arose, it occurred to me to ask the Queen what the source of your loss of sight was. When she told me, with one accord we both cried 'Manton!' For a special fee Manton will operate on you."

Barsac suddenly sat down again. He was palpably placing a great restraint upon his feelings. The long, sinewy hands were locked together.

"The brilliant enigma called Jasper Manton was at breakfast."

"Does the man know who his patient is to be?" he asked.

"Well, no. First of all, you had to be consulted, and in any case it was best to keep the matter a secret as long as possible. I told you this Manton was fond of political

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intrigue, and he might guess too much. Besides, I want to spring a surprise upon the Russian minister. Manton knows that he is wanted for a friend of mine, and he is prepared to place himself in my hands at any time. Personally, I regard him as an unscrupulous adventurer; but so long as he serves our purpose, that matters nothing. You will have to lie up for a fortnight afterwards and be nursed, but all the details you can leave to me. The point is—are you willing to try the experiment?"

Barsac laughed unsteadily. He grasped De Mormay by the hand convulsively.

"Aye, aye," he said hoarsely. "You give me new life and hope. Anyway, things can't be worse than they are. I am ready for your man at any time."

De Mormay swaggered down the avenue to the place outside the great gates where he had left his carriage. On the whole he was exceedingly pleased with the success of his mission. He stood for a moment utterly unconscious that a woman was speaking to him. She was dressed as a nurse, she was tall and young, and presently it was borne in upon De Mormay that she was exceedingly beautiful. A born squire of dames, De Mormay was all attention.

"I know where you have been, Baron," the girl said breathlessly, "and why. You are going to try an experiment upon Ferdin—I mean Count Barsac—and it will be successful. But not for long, unless I am close at hand to ward off danger, the terrible danger that is sure to follow. Oh! I cannot say more—I have said too much already. You will want a nurse presently. I implore you to let me fill the post."

The girl spread out her hands with a gesture of passionate entreaty. Her beauty and the purity of her face touched the suspicious man of the world. "Surely an extraordinary request?" he replied.

"Oh! I know it. You must deem me to be a mad woman. And yet I am sane enough, and I know only too well what I am talking about. Unless you let me have my way, you will never succeed. Avail yourself of my advice and my assistance, and you will be glad of it all the days of your life."

De Mormay hesitated and was lost. A good judge of humanity, he could see nothing but honesty and sincerity here.

"If your credentials are good," he said, "I might——"

The girl gave a little cry of delight. Her face lighted up wonderfully.

"Then I am going to undertake the task," she said. "Dr. Sergius, the late Court physician, will speak for me. Here is my card, Baron de Mormay. Ask Dr. Sergius about me, but do not mention my apparently strange request. Then you can let me know."

De Mormay bowed and indicated his carriage.

"It is practically settled," he said. "And now may I have the pleasure of driving you as far as the capital?"

"No, no, it would be dangerous, too great a risk. Thank you a thousand times. Let me say 'Good-night,' and God bless you!"

She disappeared into the heart of the night, leaving De Mormay in a state of bewilderment that he had never experienced before.

II.

THE brilliant enigma called Jasper Manton was at breakfast. He had a fine set of rooms looking over the royal park in Farsala's capital, and here he was wont to entertain the wildest and wittiest who gathered round the Court of Queen Hilda.

There was a certain dainty femininity, a suggestion of the boudoir and the scent-bottle about the rooms that kept the more robust element away. The pictures were a little too French, the draperies too light. A smell of cigar smoke was painfully in evidence, objectionably so at that hour of the day; a litter of cards, hundreds of the polished black and red specks, lay on the floor.

The man himself sat playing nervously with a slice of dry toast and a glass of hot water, though the table was laden with tempting things. There was a certain tremor of the hand and a quivering of the drooping, furtive eyes that told plainly of a too reckless pursuit of pleasure on the night before. A small, lean, active man, a man built on feline lines, a dangerous enemy who gave the suggestion of striking deep, but ever in the dark.

"Bad to worse!" he muttered. "Did ever anyone have such cruel luck with the cards? And they were watching me last night, I am certain of it. I wonder if some of my quondam French friends have tracked me here? . . . . Come in!"

A servant entered with a card. Manton's face cleared. He poured himself out a small glass of brandy and swallowed it hastily.

"Shovel up those cards, Alphonse," he said, "and ask Baron de Mormay to come in."

De Mormay entered, suave, frostily polite,

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and with an assumption of faint contempt that brought the blood into Manton's face.

"You do me honour," the latter said.

"I do nothing of the kind, my dear fellow," De Mormay replied, "and you know it. I do not play cards, and I am practically a teetotaler. I used to play cards once—in France—and I learnt some queer tricks there."

"I don't quite follow your meaning, Baron."

"Not this morning, perhaps. As your intellect clears, you will divine my thoughts. Meanwhile, I am here on behalf of the prospective patient I mentioned."

"The mysterious man who desires secrecy," Manton replied. "In such case my fee is a heavy one. A thousand gold crowns——"

"A thousand gold crowns before we leave the room, and five thousand more, provided that your operation is successful. Will that suit you?"

"Princely!" Manton cried. His face cleared like an April sky. Here was a way out of a great difficulty. It seemed almost providential. "The money is as good as in my pocket. When shall I have the pleasure of earning it?"

"So that you may take up that forged bill of old Solomon Ernst's, due in a day or two," said De Mormay coolly. "For purposes of my own, I have taken the liberty of prying into your private affairs. You see, I want to convince you of the vital importance of giving yourself over heart and soul so far as this operation is concerned. Succeed, and you are safe. Fail—but, really, we need not discuss the possibilities of failure."

Manton waved his hand impatiently. A burning spot of colour flamed on either cheek. His professional honour was touched; unscrupulous as he was, he took the greatest pride and interest in his work. Here money was not the sole consideration.

"When am I to demonstrate my operation?" he asked.

"To-day. Now. Everything is ready, the nurse engaged; for a fortnight my friend has followed out your regimen to the letter. What do you say?"

Manton nodded. He was trembling from head to foot, and words were difficult to him. More than once lately his nerves had played him the trick on the threshold of a dangerous operation. De Mormay pointed cynically to the brandy decanter.

"A little more of that," he said, "and your professional career is likely to be brief. You are further gone than I anticipated. A few days' strict training——"

Manton filled himself a bigger glass of brandy and tossed it down with a swagger. A moment later he held out his hand across the light.

"There!" he said, "steady as a rock, light as a thistledown. Had I known of this visit of yours, my doors would have been barred to my friends last night. I am ready now to operate upon an emperor or an engine-driver. Lead the way."

A pair of high-stepping bays covered the ground between the capital and Barsac Castle swiftly. Manton chatted brilliantly all the time, De Mormay for once was grave and preoccupied. Presently the two found themselves in the big dining-room where Barsac usually spent most of his time. He was in his bedroom now, where he was likely to be for some days to come.

"A magnificent room," Manton murmured. "Handsome, massive, and yet with a suggestion of lightness, and all in perfect taste. The pictures are a dream; those portraits—who is that above the Flemish buffet?"

Manton's voice rose almost to a scream and then cracked suddenly. He was trembling from head to foot, smitten with some terrible overwhelming terror. Deeply preoccupied and ill at ease, all those emotions passed over De Mormay's head.

"Eh! what?" he asked. "What? That is Count Ferdinand Barsac. Do you know him?"

"I fancied I did," Manton stammered. "But I see now that I have been deceived by a chance likeness. Any relation to my new patient?"

"He *is* your patient," said De Mormay, and lapsed into a brown study again.

Manton crossed the room and looked out of the window. His face was ghastly grey and drawn; his overstrung nerves were twitching at the lips till they quivered. He half glanced towards the door, as a detected criminal might do. Then his hand fell upon a pocket lined with De Mormay's money; he thought of that bill of Solomon Ernst's, and he took a pull at himself. Old Werther came into the room.

"The Count is ready, Baron," he said. "Will you come this way, sir?"

Manton drew back for De Mormay to precede him. He looked more like a man marching to his own funeral than a brilliant surgeon going to a further triumph. The small bag of instruments he carried in his

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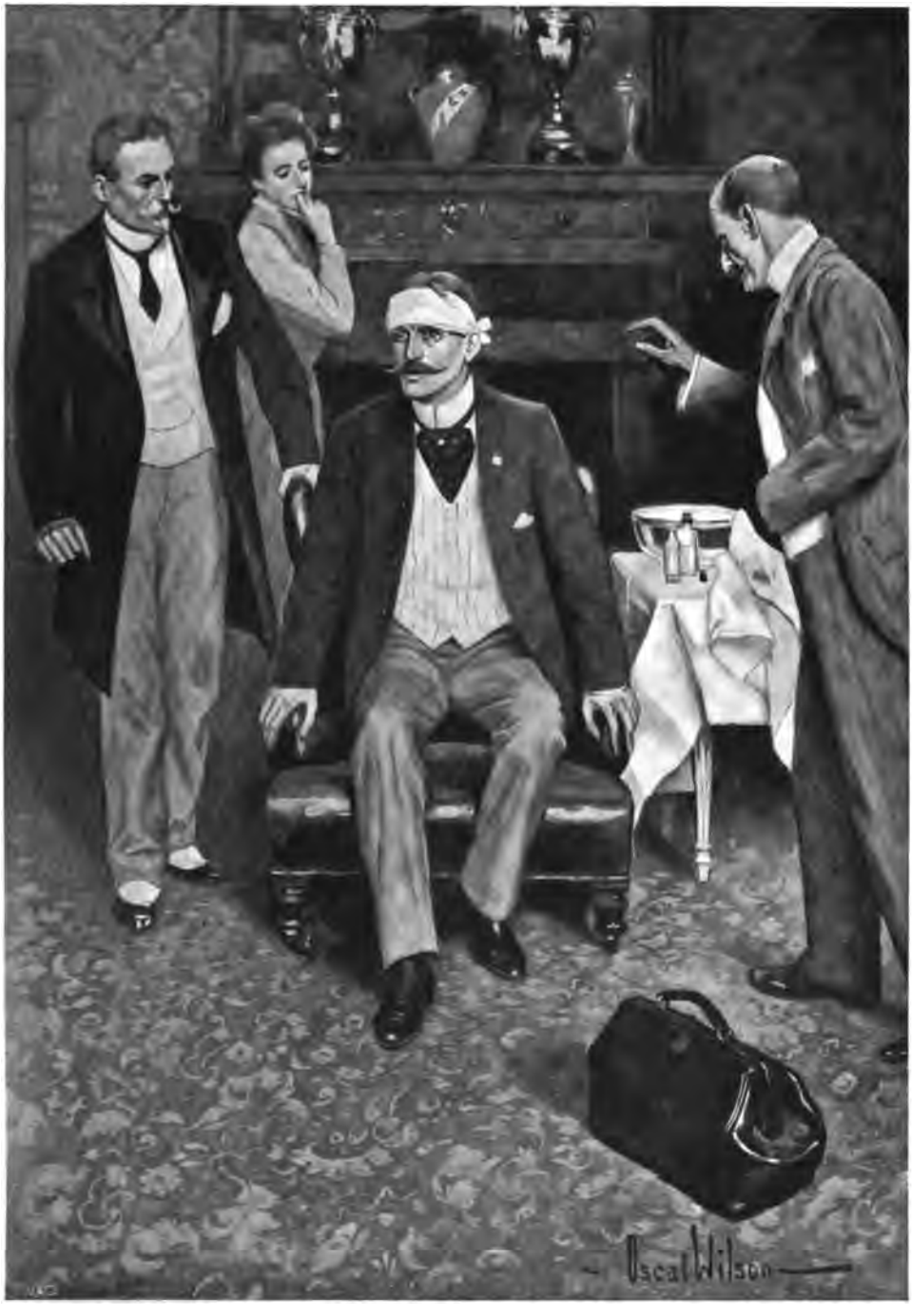

"'I can see!' he screamed."

hand trembled and clinked. He took a big lozenge from his pocket and placed it in his mouth.

Barsac lay back in a large arm-chair facing a long window. A nurse flitted about the room, ever busy, but keeping her back towards the others. Manton took but slight notice of her. There was no butchery about

the forthcoming operation, so that, until the whole thing was over, the services of the nurse would not be required.

"You are quite ready for me?" Manton asked. "Excuse me if I speak a little thickly; but I am handling a powerful drug, and I have to keep a sort of anæsthetic between my teeth."

"I am ready and eager," Barsac cried. "Pray begin."

Manton hesitated. He placed certain instruments on the table, moving them about in a vague, objectless kind of way. For some reason he seemed loth to begin. Then he opened a small phial of some pungent liquid and dipped a camel's-hair pencil into the drug. Barsac lay back with his face upturned. At the first touch of the liquid on his face he blenched. Presently his eyes were covered with a thick brown scum. There was pain behind it, for the patient groaned. A cap was fitted over his head, and to this a battery was attached. For quite a long time the hum of the battery and the laboured breathing of the patient was all that could be heard. Manton's face was pale as death, great drops of sweat stood on his forehead.

It was all over at length, the business finished. Swiftly Manton bound a silk handkerchief over the patient's eyes. He stood for ten minutes like a statue with his watch in his hand. He closed it with a snap.

"Now raise the handkerchief, but only for an instant, and open your eyes," he said.

Barsac did so. Then there came from his lips a yell that rang through the Castle. He stood up almost defiantly before them.

"I can see!" he screamed, "see, see, *see!* Let me look at the man who——"

"For the love of Heaven get him down, gag him, strangle him," Manton said in the same low, muffled voice. "The nerve will be destroyed. A few seconds longer, and all the surgeons in the world could not remedy the mischief."

De Mormay fairly launched himself upon Barsac and bore him back into the chair, whilst Manton restored the bandage. Barsac was laughing and crying in the same breath.

"I am all right now," he said. "Naturally, I lost my head for a moment. And I was anxious to see the benefactor who had brought this merciful blessing to me. Doctor, are you there?"

"I am here," Manton said hoarsely.

"The last time I could see, I looked upon the most infamous scoundrel I ever knew. And just now, when my eyes were opened again for an instant, the same scoundrel was standing before me. Was not that strange?"

Manton exclaimed that there was nothing strange about it. He discoursed learnedly of the retina and the like, but he seemed to be terribly ill at ease.

"You will be all right now," he said. "To-day you are not to remove the bandage. To-morrow—in a darkened room—you may do so for five minutes twice. In a day or two I will come and see you again. But I will tell the nurse what to do."

He got away at length. He would walk back to the capital: he was ill, and the fresh air would do him good. He literally staggered from the room; a long, shuddering sigh burst from his lips once he was alone. The nurse was waiting him.

"I wanted to speak to you," he said. "If—— Helen!"

He could say no more. He stood before the girl, bereft of speech.

"Yes, this has been a day of surprises," she said quietly. "First you find Barsac as your patient, and now you find me. Was it successful?"

"Absolutely. Why do you ask? Surely you don't——"

"I had forgotten that you wanted money desperately, and that you had been promised an enormous fee if successful. But there is danger for you now, and you would do anything to avert that danger once your fee is paid. It is to see that no further mischief is done that I am here. Do you understand me?"

Manton shook his head moodily.

"No, I don't," he said. "Clever as I am, I never professed to understand a woman."

III.

BARSAC lay abed thinking, dreaming, fighting the past, or planning for the future—anything but sleeping, which was his only and legitimate business there. The best part of a week had elapsed since the operation, and the patient had progressed satisfactorily. Only once Manton had been to see Barsac, and then merely for a moment in a darkened room. There was no occasion for him to come again, he said; time and a rigid adherence to the rules laid down by the nurse were only necessary now. Besides, Manton had an urgent call to Vienna which he could not possibly disobey.

To all this the nurse had listened in rigid silence. Barsac was inclined to talk at times,

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but the taciturnity of his companion drove him back on himself. Yes, she was wonderfully kind and attentive, she seemed to anticipate every want and requirement, she was always at hand. Barsac wondered if she were young and pretty; certainly her hands were soft and soothing, and the subtle fragrance of her hair suggested dreams of beauty. Her voice was not pleasing, it was too low and too hard. Well, Barsac's natural curiosity would be gratified in a day or two.

Hitherto he had been an exemplary patient. Now he was getting irritable and impatient. He longed to get the bandages off his eyes, he wanted to see the beauties of Art and Nature again. Surely a few hours more or less could make no difference?

So he lay there till the great clock over the stable chimed the midnight hour. How wonderfully still the Castle was! It might have been a palace of the dead. The marvellous quietness was getting on Barsac's nerves. He rose presently and half dressed himself. Then he felt his way down the stairs until he came to the dining-room. He moved now with a free and accustomed step.

He could touch every object there, he could see everything in his mind's eye; the recollection of everything, down to the Cellini spill-cups on the mantel, was perfectly clear. If he could only really see them! He switched on the electric light, then he stood trembling there like a child about to do wrong.

"I must see those things," he murmured. "I *must*."

He plucked the bandage from his eyes much as a child would have done. Just for an instant a red wave with points of flame in it filled the room, and Barsac sat trembling with something like fear. An instant later, and the mist passed away. There come pure joys at rare intervals in most lives, but never a sweeter and rarer than the joy that filled Barsac at the moment.

He had to hold on to himself as he sat in his chair. A round Florentine mirror close by showed him his own shining eyes. There was neither weakness nor suggestion of weakness there. He would never wear that bandage again.

His eyes were clear and bright as a star. Never had he so thoroughly appreciated the beauty of his home before. He saw the shaded lights glowing through the artistic tangle of flowers and fern, he saw how the pictures stood out on the red-tinted walls. For a little time Barsac fairly revelled in it all.

Then his mood changed. He was filled with a passionate resentment against the man who had robbed him of five precious years. Only now he fully realised what he had missed. If he could only have that scoundrel here now and kill him, he felt that the full measure of his satisfaction would be running over. But he could track the fellow now. He would run him down to the end of the world.

As Barsac rose, a sudden cry smote on the startled air. It was a woman's cry of pain and distress, ending suddenly as if some strong hand had choked it. There was a sound overhead like somebody stealthily crossing Barsac's bedroom. A burglar, doubtless. In his slippered feet Barsac crept upstairs.

There was no doubt whatever about it. Somebody was in the bedroom. On tiptoe Barsac crept cautiously forward. He felt along the inside of the doorway for the electric switch, there was a sharp treble click, and the room was bathed in brilliant light. A man was bending over the bed. He looked up with a startled cry. As his eyes met those of Barsac, he fell back half paralysed on the bed.

Barsac fairly screamed with the ferocity of delight that filled him. Truly the stars were on his side just now. He stood there panting as a hound might do after he had pulled the quarry down.

"I am in luck to-day," he said between his quick, gasping breaths. "Oh! my good angel has been kind indeed to me! So I have found you, Adrian! You have come here after all the years, to your own destruction! Why?"

The man answered nothing. Speech was utterly beyond him. He had come prepared to find a blind and helpless man, he had found one with all the attributes of clean and vigorous manhood.

"I am going to kill you," Barsac said. All trace of anger had disappeared now. He spoke slowly and deliberately. "None saw you come, none shall see you go away. The moat is deep, and lead is here for the asking. You shall die."

Still the intruder said nothing. He sat there watching Barsac with a fascinated fear as a bird watches a snake.

"So you found out that I had recovered my sight," Barsac went on. "You discovered that Science had found a way out for

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me, and you were frightened. You knew that, once I could see again, I should follow you to the ends of the earth. It was not enough that you robbed me of the woman I loved, but you must also rob me of my sight. Time was when you were my friend, Adrian, a friend whom I trusted in spite of many warnings. Then I discovered what people had many a time hinted to me—you were a card-sharper. You knew that I was watching you, that I meant to denounce you. It was then that I allowed you to prescribe for me for the little trouble I had with my right eye. To make yourself safe, and to render me harmless, you destroyed my sight with your infernal drug. You would still have posed as my friend, but I discovered what had happened and I nearly killed you. There is the mark on your forehead now. Why should I not kill you?"

The other remained silent. He glanced towards the door. Barsac smiled grimly.

"No avenue of escape there," he cried. "You came here to-night to repeat your work. You could not have lived with the knowledge that I was my own man again. And you came too late, my friend. You might have screwed up your courage to the sticking-point a week ago. Do you know that I have been sitting downstairs thinking of bygone days—longing to meet you! And you are here. Get up!"

The last two words rang out clear and crisp. The trembling wretch on the bed obeyed. From over a writing-table Barsac took down two fencing-foils, rapiers keen and clean.

"Take one," he said. "I am going to kill you, but that does not of necessity imply murder. You shall have a chance for your life."

"Brandy," the other man gasped. "Give me brandy."

Barsac shook his head. He stood waiting before the foe until the latter should have summoned some of his lost manhood back again. Suddenly he made a furious lunge at Barsac that the latter had some difficulty in avoiding. The old trick of wrist and quickness of eye had not come back to him yet.

"Would you?" he said between his teeth. "Then come on!"

The two blades crossed vigorously, for the other man was fighting for his life, and well he knew it. Of the two, Barsac was incomparably the better swordsman, but there was just a chance for his antagonist to score.

There was a lunge, a quick gasp, and a tiny spurt of blood ran down the other man's collar. The room was filled with the din of clashing steel, the tramping of feet, and the quick breathing of the swordsmen, when the door opened and the nurse, pale and dishevelled, staggered in. Loudly as she cried out, nobody heeded her.

A long ebony cane lay on the table. The nurse Helen snatched it up and beat down the foils, heedless of her own danger.

"He struck me down and I fainted," she gasped, "or I should have been here before. There must be no more of this. Put those murderous tools away!"

"Helen!" Barsac gasped. "What does this mean? My good fortune must have turned my brain. I shall wake up from my dream presently."

"I have been your nurse," the girl Helen said. "I came to—to save you from a great danger."

"Ah! from that man yonder. He robbed me of my sight. Let me kill him!"

"Stop!" Helen cried. "He robbed you of your sight in Paris, and he has given it back to you again. You know him as Jasper Adrian. But he is your doctor—Manton."

Barsac dropped into a chair, utterly overcome.

"What does it all mean?" he asked feebly.

"I am going to tell you," Manton said suddenly. "When your friend Baron de Mormay brought me here, I had not the remotest idea who my patient was. When I found out, I made up my mind that the operation should not be successful. But five thousand crowns hung on that result, and I wanted them to keep me out of gaol. The operation was successful, and only yesterday De Mormay paid me for you. Why I came here to-night you can guess. I have no more to say."

Barsac turned somewhat coldly to the girl.

"Have you no explanation to offer?" he asked.

"Only this, Ferdinand. I came here to save you, I have been near you always. I wrote and wrote, but I got no reply. When I knew that my half brother was here——"

"Your what? Say it again."

"My half brother; Jasper is that. I should have told you before, but was ashamed. He robbed you of your eyes, but he restored them again. And I have saved you. Have a little mercy and a little gratitude, Ferdinand, and let him go. If

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"Nurse Helen snatched it up and beat down the foils, heedless of her own danger."

any of the love you once had for me remains, let him go."

The girl was pleading passionately, her beautiful face shone behind her tears. A great struggle seemed to be going on in Barsac's breast.

"Follow me," he said. He led the way to the hall and flung open the great door.

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"Now go, and never let me see you again. Leave Farsala, and you are safe as far as I am concerned. Nor need you have any anxiety as to your sister; I will see to her."

Manton shot like a catapult into the heart of the night. Barsac led the girl to the dining-room and placed her tenderly in a chair.

"My guardian angel," he murmured. "Truly I have been blind in more ways than one. You need not tell me what happened this evening—I can divine it all. Helen, does a little of the old love remain? Mine has never ceased to burn bright and clear."

"Always the same," Helen whispered. "*Semper eadem* is our family motto. Ferdinand, I cannot stay here. I must go back to my old friend Sergius."

"For a brief space," Barsac replied meaningly. "Then Dr. Sergius must give you up to me for good and all. And I shall be an impatient lover."

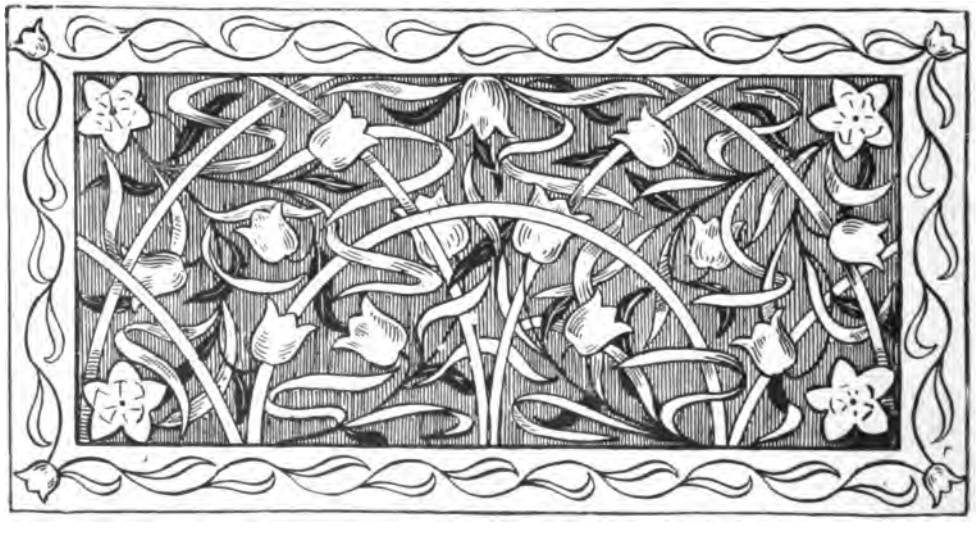
Barsac lifted up the girl's hand to his lips, and then with a bow left the room and closed the door behind him, the happiest man in the kingdom of Farsala.

* * * * *

From the *Staats Journal*, Dec. 5, 19—:

"It is with feelings of the most profound satisfaction that we have to record a perfectly honourable and amiable understanding between Farsala and Russia over the Ural mines pre-emption matter. Count Ferdinand Barsac's mission to St. Petersburg has been crowned with success. Therefore the claims under a clause in the Convention have been abandoned. Whether or not there is anything in the rumour that the Convention had been tampered with, it is impossible to say; at any rate, now the drawer up of that document is happily blessed with sight again, anything of the kind was pretty certain to be discovered. The resignation of Count Rustmann opened the way to a better understanding with Russia, and all is well that ends well. Count Barsac arrives here on Friday next, when he and his beautiful bride are certain of a warm reception. It is not given to every statesman to win a great diplomatic triumph and a lovely wife within the space of a month. And Count Barsac is to be warmly congratulated upon both happy events.

"Also undoubtedly he has solved the problem as to who is to be Prime Minister in the near future."



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LOST ON THE VELD.

By H. RIDER HAGGARD.*

I KNOW no country in the world where it is easier to be utterly lost than South Africa. Once or twice during the recent war the reader may have noted in the melancholy lists of casualties printed in the papers the name of some unfortunate, and after it such words as these, "Lost on veld and found dead."

That fate has overtaken many during the last half century, and by many more it has been but just escaped. For instance, the gentleman who, some few years ago, finally obtained from Lobengula, the late king of the Matabele, the concession under which the Chartered Company of British South Africa was first incorporated, lost himself on his way back to civilised regions. He was, I believe, found at last in an almost dying condition; another few hours and he must have been gone, and the precious document in his pocket might have rotted in the rain or been blown away, never to be seen again. In that event it is possible enough that the whole course of the history of Southern Africa would have been changed, since very likely Lobengula might have refused to set his hand to another paper.

Natives are, of course, much less likely to be lost than white men, since, even in stretches of country which they do not know, the instinct of locality and direction is far stronger in them than in us, out of whom, in many instances, it has been bred in the course of generations. On both of the occasions of which I am about to tell, I was rescued by a native.

Animals, by the way, have a still surer intuition. On several occasions in Africa I have known spans of oxen to travel hundreds of miles back to the place where they were bred, across hills and plains upon which they had never set a hoof. Once a horse of mine that was stolen came back in this way, it is believed from the Cape, a distance of nearly a thousand miles.

Yet even Kaffirs make mistakes at times. I remember Sir Theophilus Shepstone, whose name will always be famous in South African history, one of whose officers I was, telling me this story:—

On some occasion which I forget, he was upon the Mooi River heights in Natal. These heights, at certain periods in the year, are visited by mists, which, I suppose, must come up from the sea. At any rate, they are denser than any that I have seen elsewhere, even than those which sometimes cover the lowlands here in Norfolk in autumn, which we call "rokes." In such a mist, with a Zulu companion, he lost himself. The Zulu wished to take one way back to the camp, but Sir Theophilus was convinced, although neither of them could see an inch before their faces, that this road would lead them over a precipice. The Zulu was chilled to the bone and terrified even to the extent of disobeying his chief's orders.

"I will go on," he said. "I will not die here, even for you, 'Sompseu'"—that was Shepstone's native name.

"If you take a step forward, I will shoot you," answered Sir Theophilus, lifting the gun which he carried.

Then the Kaffir gave in, and in due course they reached their camp in safety. Afterwards it was proved that Sir Theophilus was right, and not the Zulu. Had they gone but a few paces forward, they would both of them have fallen over a cliff and been dashed to pieces.

I remember that on the same occasion he told me another story of this place—we were travelling over the Mooi River heights at the time. It exemplifies the extraordinary fidelity of the Zulu, who will die rather than disobey his orders.

"I had occasion," he said, "in the early days of the Colony, to send despatches down to Maritzburg from up country. The bag was given to two native runners, whom I ordered to travel at full speed. They started with no clothing except the *moochas* round their middles, carrying assegais in their hands. On this plateau at the foot of the Karkloof they were overtaken by a violent snowstorm, for the season was midwinter. For a while they staggered on, till the cold, striking into his naked body, caused the man who was carrying the despatch-bag to

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succumb. Feeling that he could go no further, he handed over the bag to his companion, charging him to deliver it and report his death.

"This man took it, bade him farewell, and went on, heading for a Kaffir kraal which he knew to be in the neighbourhood. When he was but two hundred yards from the huts, the cold overpowered him, and there he lay down and died.

"Meanwhile the first Zulu, with the last effort of his strength, had crept into an ant-bear hole which he found at hand. As it chanced, the evaporation from his body warmed the hole, so that instead of dying he only slept, to wake next morning to find the sun shining upon him and the snow gone. Creeping from his hole, he continued his journey and was presently confronted with the corpse of his companion. Removing the bag from the body, he put it about his own neck and in due course delivered the despatches at Maritzburg, at the same time, in the most matter-of-fact way, reporting what had happened. Since then," added Sir Theophilus, "I have never sent a runner over the Mooi River heights in winter without providing him with a great-coat."

"He handed over the bag to his companion, charging him to deliver it and report his death."

Some way from these heights, but in lower land, is a district called "Weenen," or "Weeping," so named for the following reason: In or about the year 1838, a large number of Boers, who for reasons too long to describe here had emigrated from the Cape Colony, were encamped in this part of Natal.

It was at this time that Pieter Retief and a hundred of his companions—I have no space to describe how—were murdered by the Zulu king Dingaan at his great kraal in Zululand. After the bloody deed was done, Dingaan sent out his *impis*, or armies, to destroy the emigrant Boers in Natal. Destroy them they did, for six hundred of these poor people—men, women, and children together—perished beneath their assegais in undefended laagers.

Says the late Charl Celliers, an elder of the Dutch Reformed Church, in his journal: "We came upon the spot where many of our people had been murdered who, whilst flying to others for help, were overtaken by the Kaffirs. I was an eye-witness to the fact. Among these corpses were found two girls aged about twelve, pierced one with nineteen and the other with twenty-one assegai wounds." They were still alive, and strangely enough recovered, the only survivors of their respective families. Their names were—for I suppose that they are both dead now—Johanna Van der Merwe and Katherine Magaretta Prinslo.

It was very near the spot of this dreadful occurrence, if not actually on it, that I met

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with my first experience of being lost. We had inspanned on the banks of the beautiful Blau-Krantz River and started on a long trek with our ox-wagon. In an hour or so we entered the bush country, through which the track that we were following—for in those days it could scarcely be called a road—wound its devious way.

I was riding a Kaffir pony and carrying a gun, as was our custom when on trek. Presently, hearing partridges calling not far off in the bush, I whistled to my pointer dogs and set out to try to get a shot. Very soon the dogs began to draw on the birds, but the partridges were strong runners, and I was half a mile or more from the road before they rose. I fired at them, with what result I do not remember, and turned to come back.

Presently I struck what I thought was the road, and followed it for a mile or more, only to discover at length that it was nothing but the bed of a dried-up watercourse. Leaving this in a hurry, I tried to hit the track—an occupation which I pursued with singular want of success for the next three or four hours. In order to be prepared for such an emergency I had carried a compass for many months. As it happened, however, upon that particular occasion this useful instrument was not in my pocket, so my ideas of direction were of the vaguest.

Towards evening, being now thoroughly lost, I rode up a bush-clad hill in the hope of catching sight of the caps of the wagons. No wagons could I see, however, but to my delight I perceived, about two miles away, three white-walled houses, which appeared to be surrounded with mealie gardens. To them I steered through bush and over hills and streams—a very rough ride. At length they were at hand, and I rejoiced exceedingly, for pony, dogs, and myself were all tired out, and here, at any rate, was a shelter where we could sleep.

Yet the place seemed strangely lonesome; no dog barked, no cattle lowed. Moreover, the fields bore no crop of maize, as I had thought, only a dense growth of weeds and withered grasses, out of which wild guinea-fowl rose screeching. Now I perceived that the lands had not been ploughed for years, and that the fruit hung rotting on the tall and tangled pomegranate fences with which they were once protected. I forced my horse through what had been a hedge of monthly roses and an orchard of peach trees strangled in the embrace of creepers, up to the first house. It was roofless; the door lay, a heap of rotten timber, across the threshold, while on the hearth in the *sit-kamer*, or sitting-room, were logs of half-burned wood, their unconsumed portions riddled with worms.

When, I wondered, had that fire been lighted, and what had frightened away the housewife? Some savage inroad, perhaps, in the early days of the Colony, or the ravages of an epidemic of fever. At least she and all who belonged to her had left long years ago and in haste.

I rode on to the next house and the next. Their condition was the same—all were deserted. About the place was an air of the saddest desolation, which my weakness and disappointment, added to the effects of the lurid glow of the sunk sun reflected from the black breast of a muttering thunderstorm, and the sobbing moan of the evening wind, all tended to enhance. Of course, I should have stopped there for the night, for the bare walls would have given some protection, and neither I nor my horse was fit to go any further.

But the aspect of the spot took hold of my nerves; it seemed to me ghost-ridden and unholy, a home of forgotten tragedy and bloodshed. Rather than sleep there, I would wander till daylight in the bush. It could not, I thought, be so dismal where only Nature reigned.

So I struck off at hazard into the trees.

Before I had gone half a mile, the thunderstorm burst over me. It was a true African storm. America may show its counterparts, but Great Britain has none. First comes an icy rush of wind, such as might blow off snow-clad mountains; then a silence, broken suddenly by a low, moaning sound; and then the storm. Flash upon flash of lightning in many fearful shapes, followed by peal upon peal of such thunder as seems to shake the earth. After that the rain in one straight deluge that with a solid sheet of water seems to link earth to heaven.

In this instance I was drenched to the skin in five minutes. Next, like the descent of a great pall, without any space of twilight, the darkness fell upon the earth. I was bewildered and knew not what to do, but as a last resource turned my horse and tried to win back to the ruined houses. Needless to say, I could not find them, and at length came to a full stop in the bush. Never can I remember feeling more physically wretched.

While I, or rather the horse, stood thus, one of the shivering dogs growled faintly. I looked up, and by a low gleam of starlight

which crept from under the edge of the curtain of departing storm perceived something white gliding through the bush. Answering to the spur, the pony leapt forward. Next second I heard a guttural exclamation—"*Ou!*" and distinguished an assegai thrust within an inch of my face. By degrees I made out its holder—a stalwart Zulu, clad in a cast-off military white coat of an Austrian officer; indeed, had it not been for this coat I should never have seen him. The man made me out also and lowered the point of his spear.

But now came the difficulty—he knew no English, and at that time I knew no Zulu. Therefore it was impossible for me to explain to him why I was there or whither I wanted to go. On one point, however, I was very decided—that he should go nowhere without me. He tried to move away, but I rode by his side on the footpath that he was following until he stopped. Now the man began to grow sulky and grumbled aloud. Evidently he had business elsewhere to which he wished to attend. On my part I grew angry, for it seemed ridiculous that he should desire to depart and leave me shivering in this abominable bush. Still, what was to be done? I racked my brains, and by the growing starlight could see that the Kaffir was glancing to right and left, seeking an opportunity to escape.

Then a bright idea struck me. "Sompseu," I said, "Sompseu!" To the mind of the reader that word will convey no impression; nevertheless, it was and doubtless still is known by every native from the Zambesi down to Cape Agulhas as the title by which the Bantu peoples had for forty years named Sir Theophilus Shepstone, then Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal. Among the natives Sir Theophilus was in those days considered the greatest of white men, since in him, because of a curious fiction I have no space to explain, was supposed to dwell the spirit of Chaka, the dead Napoleon of the Zulus.

Now this Kaffir had heard doubtless that "Sompseu," with whom I was travelling, was passing through the neighbourhood, though, as it appeared afterwards, where he was exactly he did not know. At the name, however, his face showed signs of intelligence, whereon I hastened to back up the impression I had made by producing half-a-sovereign from my purse which I showed to him. This also he understood, for he nodded, and off we went across country.

Never shall I forget that awful ride. It s raining steadily, and the bitter wind which swept down from the hills seemed to pierce me through till at last my hands could scarcely hold the reins. For an hour and a half or more we stumbled on through the darkness, which was relieved only by an occasional flash of lightning, till at last we hit a road. Here my guide knelt down, examining it, then, rising, intimated by signs that the wagons had passed that way. Now again he attempted to leave me, but this I would not allow him to do, so once more we went forward. A few minutes later I learned by the sound of my horse's hoofs that we were off the road. Then *splash*, and I was in a river, with the water running up to my thighs, an awkward position inducing suspicion of that Zulu's integrity.

At such moments it is natural to suspect, and I could not help reflecting how easy it would be for the man to lead me over a *krantz* or a waterfall, or into deep rapids, either to be rid of me, or for the sake of the money which he had seen in my purse. What I thought most likely, however, was that he intended to desert me and escape to some Kaffir kraal, for I noticed that the cold, with which his teeth were chattering, seemed to paralyse him.

As it turned out, I wronged him, for he stuck to me as only a Zulu will; had he been Basutu or of other baser blood, it is possible, indeed, that this story would have had a different ending. For more than a mile we waded down the bed of that river, now in shallow water, now nearly swimming, and now blundering among rocks, till suddenly I found myself on dry ground again. Then we turned a corner, and there, to my intense delight, was the camp, with a great fire burning before it. By what instinct that savage knew where to seek it, and how he managed to keep the true direction journeying across country in that darkness, I cannot understand to this day. Nor could he give any intelligible explanation of his feat, or why he had led me along the course of the torrent. My belief is, however, that he did this because he could not see the road and knew that it would be impossible to lose his direction in the water.

I need scarcely add that I found everybody in the camp somewhat disturbed at my absence. They had sent to seek for me, lighted fires, and blazed away a good deal of ammunition in single shots without result, so that my reappearance towards midnight partook of the nature of a surprise. It appeared that I had wandered far away down the Blau-Krantz hills to a spot not often

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"Through bush and over hills and streams."

visited even by natives. Indeed, it was only through the accident of my friend the Zulu being on some midnight and illegal visit to a witch doctor who had his habitation far away in a secret hut or cave that brought him through this deserted district, which was said by the natives to be haunted.

Doubtless at first he took me for the "spook" of some dead white man, and even when he discovered his mistake was unwilling to accompany me, since to do so would cause him to break his appointment with the magician. Had I not chanced to stumble across him, wet through, cold, and foodle

as I was, my fate would certainly have been disagreeable, and might have been unfortunate, for in that neighbourhood there were no kraals where I could have taken shelter, even if I had found strength to seek them on the following morning. As it was, being young and vigorous in those days, I took no harm from my wetting. Of the history of the deserted houses I was never able to learn anything.

The next time that I lost myself seriously—this time on the high veld, and not in the bush country—must have been four or five years later. I was then Master of the High Court of the Transvaal, which in the meanwhile had been annexed to the British Empire. Part of my duty was to accompany upon circuit round the country Mr. Justice Kotzé—the judge whose name has since been before the public in connection with his refusal to submit to the illegal dictation of the late Transvaal Government. Now, in those days there were no railways in the Transvaal, which was but a vast land very thinly populated by Boers. Therefore we were obliged to make our journeys, that took us five or six weeks to accomplish, by means of the primeval wagons, to which were harnessed spans of oxen or, sometimes, of mules. Our only white companion was the usher of the Court—that is, until he got raging drunk and threatened violence, after which we were obliged solemnly to discharge him in the midst of the open veld. On this occasion, I remember, might have been seen the spectacle, probably unique, of a learned judge seated upon the bosom of a furious person who swore at and tried to bite him, while a less learned "master" tackled his arms and legs.

Those journeys afford my most delightful recollections of South Africa. Frequently it took us a week or more to trek from one circuit town to the next, travelling all the while through country practically uninhabited, except by the great herds of game which in those days still roamed about its plains. On summer nights we used to sit outside our wagon, while I cooked our simple meal at the camp-fire, and in winter we perched ourselves upon the cartels, or hide-strung bed-frames, and, closing down the tent flaps, read Shakespeare to each other by the light of a lantern. Once we were caught by a snowstorm, and woke upat dawn to find the veld all white about us, and to see within twenty paces a great herd of blesbok wandering round the wagon. I remember that, firing from the *voorkissie*, or driving-box, we secured two noble rams.

I wish that here I had space to give the reader an account of a day's shooting such as we enjoyed from time to time, but I must get on to the history of my adventure.

One morning we inspanned shortly after sunrise—we were traversing the vast plains known as the Wakkerstroom flats—purposing to trek for two or three hours and then halt to breakfast. The morning was so cold that I had not left the wagon, but was seated there in my ulster, when suddenly I saw, within two hundred yards of the road, or rather wagon-track, a small herd of wilderbeeste standing staring at us through the light mist. Calling to the *voorlooper* to halt the oxen, I snatched my rifle—it was a Westley-Richards falling block, then the common weapon in the Transvaal—put in a cartridge, and, jumping down, took a steady shot at the nearest antelope, a young bull. Next instant I heard the bullet clap upon him, and over he rolled, kicking up the ashes of the burnt grass in a cloud of black dust.

"Well done, Mr. Master!" said the judge, not without a touch of jealousy in his voice, for in this matter of shooting we entered into a friendly competition; "that was a capital shot." I smiled with the air of one to whom such performances were of the easiest, and called to the Kaffirs to accompany me to the buck. In fact, however, the shot was a bad one, for the bullet, instead of striking the wilderbeeste behind the shoulder, had hit it far back, breaking the left hind-leg above the knee. Even as I spoke, the poor creature found its feet, or three of them, and hobbled off five or six hundred yards to the crest of a rolling ridge of land, where I could see it standing disconsolately against the sky-line. Now it was the turn of his Lordship to smile in a superior fashion.

"All right," I said, "I'll soon have him," and I bade my servant put the saddle on my horse. Three minutes later I was cantering towards the wounded bull, purposing to dismount when within a hundred yards or so and finish him. But the wilderbeeste had enjoyed enough of my company and would not wait. So soon as he saw me coming, he moved off into a misty hollow, to reappear four or five hundred yards further on, standing upon the opposing ridge. Again I rode for him and again he moved away. Then, dismounting, I ventured a shot at about five hundred yards—not a bad one, considering all things, but ineffective, for the bullet knocked up the dust beneath his belly and caused him to depart even quicker than before. Growing nettled, I determined to ride into him. Seeing

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"The man made me out also and lowered the point of his spear."

that the creature had one leg broken, this might be thought an easy task, but in fact it was not so. The wilderbeeste, half starved upon the winter veld, was light and thin, and it is wonderful how fast buck in that state can travel even with a broken hock; also the ground was here very rough, strewn with stones, pitted with ant-bear holes and, in places at the bottom of the land waves, marshy. Lastly, my horse was not a good one—had I been riding my own shooting animal, a creature famous in the Transvaal in his day, the result would have been different. Still, I rattled him along, but it was not until we had covered several miles that I even got near that wounded bull. The end of it was that after one or two more misses, a well-planted bullet knocked him over dead. Throwing my horse's reins over his head, as a signal that he was not to run away, I sat down upon the hairy carcass of the poor wilderbeeste to get cool, for by now the sun was hot, and my progress had been rapid and tumultuous. Then it occurred to me that I must be some distance from the wagons, of which I could see nothing at all; also that I was not absolutely certain in which direction to look for them, since during the long hunt my quarry had changed his direction several times. Further, I remembered that as I could not move it by myself, and had no hunting-knife with me to cut off the best of the meat, the poor creature was not of much immediate use. The upshot of these reflections was that I tied my handkerchief to the turned horns, in the hope that its fluttering might scare away the *aasvögles*, or vultures; then I started back for the wagons, to get help as quickly as possible, having first, after many doubts, made up my

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mind in which direction they must lie, and at what angle I should ride to cut their path. To begin with, things went swimmingly. The canter over two or three miles of veld brought me to a wagon-track which I at once recognised as the road that I had left. Only it was clear that I had miscalculated my angle a little, as on this path there was no spoor of wheels; indeed, its appearance suggested that nothing had passed over it for weeks. Perhaps the wagons had waited for me, I reflected, or perhaps they had not reached the spot; doubtless I should find them a little further back. So I turned to the left and trotted along the road for one mile, for two, for four, for five, when lo! suddenly it seemed to vanish away into the veld. A few ancient wagon-ruts coming from this way and from that, and it was no more. Evidently I had made some slight mistake; indeed, now that I came to think, I was sure what it was—I had not allowed for certain turns the wilder-beeste took. Without question the road lay out yonder, and I must strike it within an hour's ride. I rode for the hour, I rode for two hours, and still it was not. Then I set out back again to regain the track I had left, thinking that perhaps I had done this too hastily, and that if I had taken the turn to the right instead of the left, presently it would have led me into the real, true, and original road. I never found that track again, nor, in fact, would it have helped me if I had.

Midday came and I dismounted to rest my tired horse. I was also growing weary, for I had eaten nothing since the previous evening, and, having left the wagons in such a hurry, was even without tobacco or a match. Seated there upon an ant-heap, I made a plan of all my wanderings, and at length discovered where the error lay. Filled with a hope that was almost a certainty, I mounted and started on again, only to find that there must have been some miscalculation, for still there was no road—nothing but bare, brown veld rolling on and on for ever—far as the eye could reach.

Now I began to despair. But it is always darkest before the dawn. Riding to the top of a little hill, suddenly, to my delight, I saw, from four to six miles away, the white caps of the wagons—two of them, one following the other, as they should do. So off I started, thinking happily of the drink which awaited me, for I had found no good water and was growing thirsty. Owing to the formation of the ground, presently I lost sight of the wagon-caps, but, knowing that this eclipse was merely temporary, followed steadily upon my line. An hour or so later I came to the crest of a rise, and there before me were two small outcrops of white quartz—my wagon-caps! The disappointment was, I admit, severe, and what made it worse was that the usual afternoon African thunderstorm was coming up. It came up; it drenched me through and departed, leaving a grey sky behind it. Still I rode on aimlessly, without plan, till an accident happened. In travelling down a slope made greasy by the rain, my tired horse fell suddenly, throwing me on to my shoulder and the side of my head. I suppose that the shock must have stunned me for awhile; at any rate, I remember coming to my mind again to find myself lying in swampy ooze, still holding the rifle, with the horse, that was too weary to run away, standing within a few paces.

It was sunset, and the last rays of daylight peeped forth beneath the edge of a bank of clouds. Seated there, half dazed, of a sudden I remembered that as I sat on the wagon-box that morning the sun had struck me full in the face, dazzling me. Now again it struck me in the face when it was setting, and its rays travelled from the direction in which I had been riding for some hours when my horse fell. Obviously, therefore, I was heading west when I should have been heading east. To my relief I found that I could stand. I was sore and bruised, but with no twisted ankle or broken bones. Had that accident overtaken me, what, I wonder, would have been my fate, unable to stir in this untravelled plain?

Struggling on to my horse, I turned his head, riding away from the sunset. At that moment, as I discovered afterwards, I cannot have been much less than twenty miles from the wagons. The day died, but there was a bright moon, and by its light I went forward for hour after hour until at last my horse refused to travel further. Then I slipped from its back, knee-haltered it with the *riem* which was upon the head-stall, and, for the sake of its warmth, strapped the cloth from beneath the saddle round me as best I could. I was parched with thirst, perished with wet and cold, starving, tired out, and much shaken. In this condition on that bleak veld, swept by the icy winter wind of the African highlands, I found myself face to face with the possibility—even with the likelihood—that I should not live to see another dawn. The loneliness was awful, and the silence broken only by the howling of hyenas or other

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"For more than a mile we waded down the bed of that river."

night beasts. Presently I became aware of shapes stalking past me in the moonlight within fifty or thirty yards. They were trekking game, wilderbeeste, blesbok, and other antelopes. I sat up, and having some cartridges left, fired all except one at them, thinking that I might make some kind of a meal off their raw flesh ; but either because of the light, or on account of my shaken condition, which destroyed my aim, they galloped away untouched. Then once more I lay down upon the veld, for now all fear had left me and I seemed to desire nothing except sleep. Then it was that I thought I heard, far, far away, the sound of a human voice. I sat up and fired my last cartridge,

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but as there was no answering shout, concluded that my fancy had deceived me, and once more lay down. Next came a kind of dream, in which I heard a voice calling, and called back; and after that I awoke to find myself being shaken by the shoulder, and standing over me, spear in hand, the stalwart shape of my own body-servant, a Zulu called Mazooku. How had he found me? Upon my word, I could never discover. He had been very troubled in his mind because I did not return, he said, and at nightfall set out from the place where the wagons were encamped, some miles away, to look for me, pausing now and again to shout in the native fashion that throws the voice to an enormous distance. It was one of these shouts of his which caught my ear, although he was still so far away that he never heard my answering shot, the last that I fired. But if his ears could not catch the report, his quick eyes saw the flash from the mouth of the rifle—those were the days of black powder. Towards that flash he travelled, and at length caught sight of the outline of a horse standing against the sky, and so found me sinking into coma.

Had it not been for the intelligence and fidelity of this Zulu, I doubt if I should have lasted through that bitter night. On the winter high veld, when wet through and foodless, it is easy to perish of exposure.

A WOMAN.

By Charles Hanson Towne.

YOU say that you are but a woman—you
Who are so very wonderful to me.
You tell me there is little you can do,
Little indeed that all the world can see.
There are no battles on the open plain
That you can fight, as I, a man, can fight;
But who shall say your life is lived in vain
If all my darkened days you have kept light?

Oh, little woman-heart, be glad, be glad
That you are what God made you! Well I know
How you have nerved me when the day was sad,
And made me better—yea, and kept me so!
Be very glad that you, in your white place,
Your little home, with folded hands can be
A silent influence to whose source I trace
The little good there ever was in me.

To be a woman! Is there any more
That you have need to be from day to day?
How wonderful to have your heart, your store
Of purity and goodness, and to say,
"One that I love is nobler since I came;
One that loves me is better for my sake."
A woman! Oh, there is no greater name
That ever on the mortal tongue shall wake!

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TO THE RESCUE!

FROM THE PICTURE BY FRED W. BURTON.

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AN ARISTOCRATIC SOCIALIST.

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM.

IT was just becominga debatable question with Lord Francis Hadley, Marquis of Hetherdean, whether, after all, life was worth living. In his present mood, if he had been called upon to give a definite decision with regard to this problem, he would probably have decided in the negative, although if he had been compelled to give also his reasons for such a decision, he would certainly have been at a loss to do so. Doubtless he would have muttered something about London being so beastly slow at this time of the year, and indulged in a mild oath at the post which had sent him up from Melton. But as a matter of fact, it was neither the loss of his hunting nor his non-interest in town life which was at the bottom of his Lordship's discontent with things in general. They might, perhaps, have had something to do with it, for he was a young man of no very pronounced tastes, who was accustomed to rely for his diversions almost entirely upon the usual season's pursuits, and the sudden stoppage of his favourite sport was certainly annoying. He had had quite enough of tramping over wet moors in the drizzling rain, with a gun under his arm which he was seldom called upon to use, and the shortest-tempered of Scotch keepers lagging wearily behind; nor could he find anything in town life to compensate him for his ejection from Melton, for he had not the slightest taste for dissipation in any form, and most of his friends had already shut up their town houses and gone down into the country for Christmas. But, after all, these were not the chief reasons for his depressed state, although they were the only reasons which he would have cared to acknowledge. The fact of it was that he was, or fancied that he was—which is very much the same thing—in love. There was nothing at all romantic about it. The young lady who had first attracted his notice, then his attention, and finally his heart (he was by no means the sort of young man to fall in love off-hand), was one of his own set, with whom an alliance would have been most proper and desirable. But there was one trifling difficulty in the way. Incredible though it may seem, Lord Hadley had an uneasy but distinct consciousness that the young lady in question, although she did not positively discourage his advances, seemed scarcely to appreciate them at their full value. He could not understand it at all. He had been so angled for and spoilt during the five years which had elapsed since he had attained his majority, that there was certainly some excuse for his perplexity. He was young, moderately good-looking, moderately rich. What more could she want? And yet on two separate occasions, when he had been on the very brink of a proposal, she had actually avoided it.

Now, in his perplexity Lord Hadley had done a very unwise thing. He had been unwilling to abandon the idea of making Flora Saville Marchioness of Hetherdean; but, on the other hand, he could not bring himself to face the possibilities of a rejection; and so he had laid the matter before her mother, Mrs. Saville, and there, at any rate, his suit had not been coldly received. Mrs. Saville had instantly declared herself his warm ally, and the letter which he was studying over his post-matutinal cigar with so much interest was in her clear, bold handwriting. It ran thus:—

"Bath Hotel, Bournemouth,
"*December* 21, 18—.

"My dear Lord Hadley" (he had winced a little more than once at the "My dear." It seemed so very mother-in-lawish)—"we are leaving here this afternoon for Bradgate Park, and I am writing you a few lines to remind you of your promise to spend Christmas there. We are all very well, and you will be glad to hear" (underlined) "that dear Flora's cold has quite disappeared.

I think that I may venture to give you a little good news with regard to—a certain matter. I have sometimes feared that the dear child—very silly of her—thought a little too much of Mr. Reid, who certainly has been very attentive to her. Well, we have just received a letter from him regretting that some unforeseen circumstance will prevent his spending Christmas with us. I can see that Flora is very much annoyed at this, and I really am afraid that there was some kind of secret understanding between them which, had they met at Christmas, might have led to most regrettable results. As it is, all will be well, I think, for she is evidently much puzzled about Mr. Reid putting off his visit, and asked me this morning whether I was certain that you were coming to us. You will, I am sure, let nothing prevent your paying us this visit, as the opportunity is not one to be lost if you are still in the same mind as when we last met. I shall confidently expect you, then, on the 24th, at Bradgate Park, and will send to meet the 3.30 from St. Pancras.

"With kindest regards, believe me, my dear Lord Hadley,

"Yours very sincerely,

"ELEANOR SAVILLE."

Lord Hadley, having carefully studied this epistle for nearly a quarter of an hour, consigned it at last to the pocket of his dressing-gown and pulled away savagely at his cigar. He had his own reasons for believing that Neil Reid, whom he had himself introduced to the Savilles, and who was one of his closest friends, was a somewhat formidable rival, and he scarcely felt inclined to share Mrs. Saville's sanguine views as to his chances with her daughter. Reid was certainly poor, but then his family and connections were unexceptionable, and he was undeniably clever in a quasi-literary sort of way. Besides, money would not be so much an object, for Flora was herself an heiress, and, being an only child and spoilt, would certainly have her own way. Altogether, things looked very bad indeed, and dim ideas of the Rocky Mountains and a prolonged Eastern tour were floating in Lord Hadley's mind as he lounged in his easy-chair, with his hands thrust deep into his pockets, and stared fixedly into the bright fire.

There was a knock at the door, and the servant announced, "Mr. Neil Reid."

Lord Hadley started to his feet with a muttered exclamation, which was certainly not a blessing upon the gentleman in question, and then turned round to receive his visitor.

"How are you, Reid? Haven't seen you for an age. Just tilt those papers on the floor, will you, and take a seat. Breakfast or a weed?"

Mr. Neil Reid, a tall, very good-looking young man, accepted the invitation and seated himself in a low chair opposite his host. "Rattling good cigars," he remarked appreciatively. "Boonter's?"

"No. Got 'em at old Perry's, in Bond Street. Thought you were in Paris, writing those letters for the *Centurion*. When did you come across?"

"Last Wednesday—found I could write them just as well from London; and besides, it's an infernal nuisance, but I've got to turn up at home at Christmas. Can't think what's possessed the governor, but he simply insists upon my being there to join in the festivities. I hate all that tomfoolery, but go I must. Can't afford to offend the old boy."

Mrs. Saville's information was correct, then. Lord Hadley felt a little better.

"Those sort of Christmas rejoicings are sometimes very good fun," he remarked consolingly. "I rather like an old-fash——"

"Then I tell you what, old man," interrupted the other eagerly. "You come down with me. My people will be delighted to see you, and we can find something to do. They always leave a cover or two till Christmas, and——"

"Thanks awfully, but I've promised to spend Christmas with the Savilles, at the place they've taken in Leicestershire. Can't get out of it now."

Mr. Neil Reid's face fell considerably and he bit his moustache.

"I'm sorry to hear it," he said gloomily. "Look here, Hadley," he went on, "we're old friends, and you won't mind my speaking out, I'm sure. I have an idea we're running against one another in this matter. I don't know whether you're in earnest, but I tell you frankly—I am. Let's have it out. Are we rivals?"

"Presuming that you refer to Miss Saville," Lord Hadley said a little stiffly, "we are. I intend to ask her to be my wife."

There was a dead silence for several minutes, which Mr. Neil Reid was the first to break.

"Very well, then, Hadley, let it be a fair fight between us. There's just one favour I should like to ask you. Miss Saville will

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doubtless be a little annoyed with me for throwing them over this Christmas, though, hang it all! I can't help it. You won't take advantage of that, will you? I mean to say, you'll not steal a march on me by proposing until I've seen her and explained matters? That's only fair."

Lord Hadley leaned back in his chair and laughed silently.

"Come, come, Reid, isn't that going a little too far? To make use of a very hackneyed quotation, 'All's fair in love and war,' you know. Between ourselves, you've exactly indicated what I propose doing."

Neil Reid rose to his feet with an angry exclamation and caught up his hat as if about to go, but evidently thought better of it and resumed his seat.

"It's not the slightest use quarrelling about this little matter, Reid," his Lordship remarked affably. "Come, let's drop it now; it's a fair field, and let the best man win. Now let's talk of something else. What are you going to do to-day? Can't we do something together? I never was so miserably bored in all my life."

Mr. Neil Reid, who had his own reasons for not wishing to quarrel with his rival, took out a small memorandum-book and leisurely consulted it.

"H'm! seems I'm pretty well full up," he remarked thoughtfully. "I've promised to get into Trafalgar Square and report for the *Centurion*. Then, if I can get away in time, I ought to lunch at Belton House, and take my cousins to a *matinée* somewhere Kensington way; and I'm going to dine with the Caringtons, and shall look in at Mrs. Pychley-Carr's dance, of course."

Lord Hadley threw the end of his cigar into the air and looked vicious.

"Hope you'll enjoy yourself! For my part, I hate *matinées*, especially musical ones, like poison, and I can't endure dancing attendance on a lot of women like a tame puppy dog—no offence to you, Reid. The Caringtons haven't asked me to dine, and if they had, I shouldn't go. I hate their slow, solemn dinners! Lord's is shut up; so's Hurlingham. I'm sick of the sight of Tattersall's, and I haven't got any pretty cousins to go and lunch with. What on earth is there for a man to do?"

"Come with me to Trafalgar Square and see these Socialists," Mr. Reid answered promptly. "That'll be a novelty for you, at any rate."

Lord Hadley's thin lip curled and his face assumed an expression of most patrician contempt.

"Mrs. Saville had instantly declared herself his warm ally."

"Go amongst that lot of beer-swilling, ranting lunatics! Not I. If I went, I should tell them what I thought of their folly."

"That's a little more than even you dare do," remarked Mr. Neil Reid quietly.

These words had precisely the effect

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which the speaker had intended them to have. Lord Hadley looked up quickly with a frowning face.

"Dare! I like that! Look here, Reid, if you'll engage to procure me the opportunity—you're in with all these Socialist cads, aren't you?—I'll bet you a hundred pounds that I do make a speech! There!"

"Done! I'll find you the opportunity this very morning. You must take the risk of it on your own shoulders, though. I warn you that these fellows, contemptible though you may think them, won't stand any trifling."

"Very well, I'm not afraid of them. They won't know who I am. Oblige me by touching the bell, will you, Reid? Thanks."

His Lordship's own man answered the summons.

"Burditt, have you got any very old clothes?" his master inquired gravely.

Burditt belonged to that class of highly trained servants to whom surprise and such-like emotions are strangers.

"I don't know that I have, my lord," he replied, after a moment's deliberation. "Not very old."

"I didn't suppose you had. Now listen to me. I want you to take a hansom at once and find a ready-made clothes shop—second-hand, if possible—and buy a pair of corduroy trousers, a flannel shirt, a rough coat and waistcoat, and a red cotton handkerchief. Mind you don't forget the handkerchief! Shall we say two rig-outs?" he inquired, turning to his friend, "or do you prefer going as you are?"

"As I am, by all means," answered Mr. Neil Reid, with a short laugh, glancing at his irreproachable attire. "I don't mind going amongst these people to hear what they've got to say, but I'm hanged if I care about imitating their style of dress."

"Very well, then, be off with you, Burditt, and look sharp. You going, too, Reid? Stop a bit, where shall I see you?"

"Top of Oxford Street, in an hour's time, and you'd better have your cheque-book with you," Neil Reid answered, laughing. "On second thoughts, though, I think you'd better leave it at home. You'll most certainly be mobbed if you begin to air your aristocratic notions. Better pay forfeit."

There was the slightest possible inflection of a sneer in his tone, and it had the desired effect. Lord Hadley would as likely as not have thought better of it, and have paid the money, but for the other's words. As it was, he drew himself up steadily, almost haughtily, and looked at his friend.

"I think not. If you carry out your part of the programme, I will mine."

"And if you do," muttered Mr. Neil Reid, as he stepped into a stray hansom, "it won't be my fault if you don't spend Christmas at Bradgate Park. What was it he said to me—'All's fair in love and war'? Ah, well, Hadley, I can make use of that hackneyed quotation as well as you. Socialists' Club, Camberwell Road, cabby, and look sharp."

* * * * *

At one o'clock that afternoon Trafalgar Square was filled to overflowing with a heterogeneous mob of excited people, some loungers and street vagabonds, a sprinkling of even worse characters, and a minority of the genuine unemployed, desperate with real need, and eagerly listening for the advice of those in whom, wisely or unwisely, they had put their trust. Chiefly they flocked together round a brewer's dray, on which stood several of those who were to address them, amongst whom, standing slightly in the background, was a tall, slight man, in the garb of a coal-heaver, with a red cotton handkerchief around his neck, and an expression of intense interest in his well-cut, shapely features. The meeting had commenced without interruption, and in many different parts of the Square the speakers were already haranguing the crowd from hastily extemporised platforms. Suddenly there was a cry of warning, and a large body of police were seen making desperate attempts to reach the ringleaders. That they would not be able to do this very soon became evident, for the people were wedged together so closely that they formed a quite impenetrable mass, and after a short struggle the police gave it up and, amidst howls of derision, withdrew to await reinforcements. The speaker for the nonce, however, on the principal platform, had taken alarm and vanished, and for a moment or two no one came forward. Then, just as the people were beginning to get impatient, the man with the red cotton handkerchief round his neck came boldly to the front and, turning towards the crowd, commenced to address them. His views seemed popular, for at every sentence they cheered him vehemently. Higher and higher grew their enthusiasm as his speech progressed, and cheer after cheer rent the air as his manner became more earnest and his words flowed more volubly. One man alone, standing near the platform, in a long, dark ulster and with a reporter's note-book, seemed to find

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little that was pleasant in the speaker's words, for he was standing motionless, making no attempt to write, even staring at the man on the platform with a curious expression of bewildered dismay, together with not a little disappointment. Perhaps Mr. Neil Reid had never in his life before experienced such a shock of overpowering surprise.

Suddenly, in the midst of a very storm of applause, there was a hush and a cry of warning. The police, heavily reinforced, had succeeded in getting inside the circle and were making for the platform. The orator leaped down, the crowd opened their ranks to receive him, and he passed like magic through the dense throng, and was lost to the struggling myrmidons of the law.

That evening Lord Hadley sat down to his dinner with a hearty appetite and in high good humour, rare events with him latterly. With dessert was brought in the evening paper, and presently he carelessly shook it open and began to glance through its contents. He had not gone far before he started and uttered a quick exclamation, which considerably shocked the old servant who stood behind his chair. There was some little excuse for him, though, for almost the first column his eye fell upon was headed by his own name in large type. He put down his glass, which he had been in the act of raising to his lips, and eagerly read through the paragraphs :—

"GREAT MEETING
OF THE
UNEMPLOYED IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE.

GALLANT ESCAPADE OF THE MARQUIS OF HETHERDEAN.

A Riot Avoided.

"The expected mass meeting of the unemployed was held this afternoon in Trafalgar Square, in defiance of the police regulations, and it appears quite certain that a most disastrous riot was only prevented by the gallant conduct of a young English nobleman, Lord Francis Hadley, Marquis of Hetherdean. From an early hour in the morning the Square was partly filled with a disreputable mob of loafers and vagabonds, who had assembled to take part in the afternoon's demonstration, and at no time could the police, although in great force, keep the people moving. Towards one o'clock the ingoing stream steadily increased, and an hour later a dense throng completely held the Square. Several speeches of a highly inflammatory nature were delivered, despite the desperate efforts of the police to reach the platform, and matters were in a very critical state when the Marquis of Hetherdean—who, being disguised as a working man, was not generally known—mounted the platform and expostulated with great effect. Unfortunately, no reporters succeeded in reaching the vicinity of the platform, but we understand his Lordship, in a speech of some ten minutes' duration, exposed in a most masterly fashion the dangerous errors and falsities of Socialist doctrines generally, and implored the people to disperse without any disturbance. The arguments of the orator were, strange to say, most favourably received, and, together with the arrival of a large body of police, were, without doubt, instrumental in preventing a repetition of the deplorable riots of twelve months ago, a contingency which at one time appeared imminent. There is no man in England that should feel more proud to-night than the gallant young nobleman whose heroic, though somewhat quixotic, action has spared a great city from the the disgrace of another street riot. We trust that Lord Hadley, now that he has broken the ice, will take an active part in political life, and will give us the opportunity of hearing again that eloquence, of which he must undoubtedly be possessed, in the House of Lords, where such a gift is sadly wanted."

Lord Hadley leaned back in his chair in a state of mind bordering upon stupefaction. Before he had had time to recover himself there was a knock at the door, and his servant put a letter into his hand, with the remark that it had just arrived by special messenger. He tore it open and glanced through it. It was from the Home Secretary, and alluded in highly complimentary terms to his "gallant behaviour and patriotism" in Trafalgar Square, and concluded by thanking him heartily, officially and personally, for his heroic action.

The Marquis of Hetherdean took a long breath and poured himself out a glass of wine. Scarcely had he set the glass down when Mr. Neil Reid was announced.

"My most sincere congratulations," the new-comer remarked drily, as he laid a cheque upon the table. "I had no idea that you were a rank Socialist at heart, Lord Hadley, or I might have hesitated before I framed that bet. Let me congratulate you on your opinions, your oratory, and your good fortune."

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"The meeting in Trafalgar Square."

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It struck Lord Hadley that something more than the loss of an ordinary bet was the matter with his friend and rival.

His eyes were burning with suppressed excitement, and he seemed as though he could control his temper only by a strong effort. He was still in morning dress, and there was a dishevelled appearance about him altogether, just as though he had been drinking. Lord Hadley took in these details and answered coolly—

"Much obliged, Reid. It's certainly just as well that the newspapers didn't get hold of what I really did say."

"Aye, it is," Reid assented, with a short, unpleasant laugh. "The world would be surprised to hear that your Lordship thought all differences in rank humbug, believed in an equal distribution of wealth and the establishment of a republic. What if I tell them?"

Lord Hadley shrugged his shoulders and looked perfectly indifferent.

"Look here, Hadley," exclaimed Reid savagely, "I'll make a bargain with you: give up spending Christmas at Bradgate, and leave Flora Saville with me—I want her money—and I'll do nothing. But unless you make me that promise, you shall repent it! I'll reproduce that brilliant speech of yours and publish it everywhere; and, more than that, I'll set the people on you for a hypocrite; and, if I'm cut off with a shilling, I'll go to Bradgate Park for Christmas and spoil your game with Flora Saville! Decide!"

"I have already decided," said Lord Hadley quietly, "that if you are not out of my house in two minutes, I shall throw you out. I have always had my doubts about you, and now I know that you are a cad."

Neil Reid hesitated for a moment, pale and shaking with rage. Then he turned on his heel with an evil smile and left the room.

He had scarcely gone before another visitor was announced—George Ellingcombe, Lord Hadley's cousin and his closest friend.

"My dear Francis," exclaimed the newcomer, as he established himself in an easy-chair, "why didn't you take me with you this afternoon? I might have come in for a little reflected glory, at any rate. 'Pon my word! I never dreamt that you were a philanthropist or anything of that sort. Why, all London is talking about you. Lucky beggar!"

Lord Hadley took another glass of wine, and then astonished his cousin by throwing himself back in an easy-chair and subsiding into a perfect fit of laughter. Then he sat up and wiped his eyes.

"George," he said feebly, "this'll be the death of me. Swear by everything that's holy that you'll keep it dark."

"I swear by these cigars," he remarked with mock solemnity; "proceed."

"Well, then, it's all a grand sell. They've got hold of the wrong end of the stick somehow. You see, Neil Reid bet me a hundred pounds I wouldn't make a speech to those fellows. Well, I made up my mind I would, and you know I'm rather obstinate. He got me on the platform, and I'm pretty sure now that he meant to get me mobbed. However, as I didn't see the fun of that, when my turn came to speak I just pitched it stronger than any of them—made an out-and-out Socialist speech. I really did feel sorry for the poor devils, and it's very easy when once you've made a start. You should have heard them cheer! And you should just have seen Reid's face! Of course, he'd taken care to let them know who I was, hoping to make it all the hotter for me, and it all cut the other way when they'd heard what I'd got to say. If there had been a reporter, I should have been done. I had to cut for it, I can tell you, to avoid being taken, but the people opened for me and helped me on like bricks. I nearly tumbled off my chair just now when I saw that paragraph in the evening paper, and directly afterwards had a pompous epistle from old Matthews."

The Hon. George Ellingcombe listened to his cousin's recital with open-mouthed amazement. Then he broke into a short laugh.

"By Jove! Hadley, you're a lucky fellow, and no mistake," he exclaimed vigorously. "You should just hear how people are talking about you. I don't remember such a sensation since Fred Castleton went off with the Countess. And only to think that—oh, it's too absurd! I'll keep your secret, I promise you. Can't stop a moment longer, the Mater's waiting for me. Come down to the club to-night and be lionised."

Later on in the evening, Lord Hadley did look in at the club, and was instantly beset with a shower of congratulations and chaff, all of which he received with becoming gravity and modesty. On his return home, however, he indulged in another prolonged fit of merriment, greatly to the mystification of the astonished Burditt, who began to have grave doubts as to his master's sanity. But Burditt was destined to find still greater cause for astonishment shortly.

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"A mighty roar greeted Lord Hadley's appearance."

Lord Hadley slept soundly that night, but towards morning he awoke suddenly to find Burditt by his bedside with a scared face, and a curious rumbling sound in the street below.

"What on earth's the matter?" he exclaimed, sitting up and listening.

"Matter! my lord, matter enough! Why, we shall have the house about our ears in a minute," replied the trembling servant. "There's the biggest crowd of roughs I ever saw in my life blocking up the whole street and calling for your Lordship. There they are again!" and a deafening roar from many thousand throats seemed almost to shake the house.

"Hetherdean! Hetherdean! A speech! A speech! Come out!"

Lord Hadley listened with a sudden realisation of his awful dilemma. Then he sprang out of bed and commenced hastily to dress himself.

"Quick! my trousers and waistcoat, Burditt. Don't stand there like a fool! This is serious! Now listen to me. Don't get sending for the police or bolting the doors. Get the women servants out of the house by the back door, and take the plate into the cellar. First of all, open the window. That'll do."

A mighty roar greeted Lord Hadley's appearance on the balcony—a roar half of applause, half of menace; and as it died away other cries arose.

"A speech! a speech!" "Come and contradict the newspapers." "Hurrah for Hetherdean and a republic!" "Come and let's hear what yer got to say!"

Lord Hadley cleared his throat and stood facing the people, smiling and apparently quite at his ease, until the clamour had subsided. Suddenly his eye met Neil Reid's, who was standing with one or two professional reporters right to the front. There was a triumphant look on the latter's upturned face, but Lord Hadley met it steadily and without flinching, without even abating his pleasant smile.

"My friends," he exclaimed, in clear, ringing tones, as soon as there was comparative silence, "you have taken me by surprise, but I am glad to see you. You say you want a speech. Well, I thought I'd spoken to you pretty plainly yesterday; but you shall have it all over again, if you want it. I tell you what I'd rather do, though; I'd rather stand you a breakfast. You

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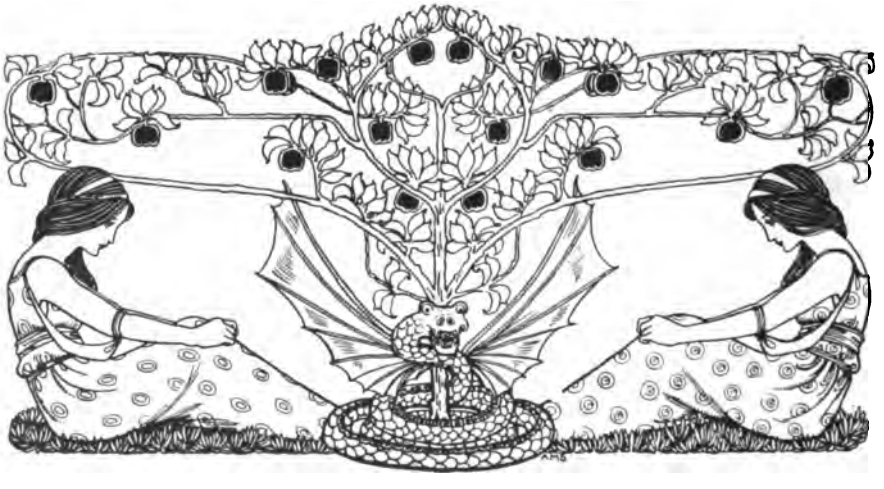
look hungry, some of you, and it's a cold morning."

There was a howl of frenzied applause from many hundreds of starving throats. One man only persisted in calling for a speech, and he was immediately hustled and jostled by a furious crowd.

"There are too many of you to come in here, I'm afraid," Lord Hadley continued. "We must manage it another way. I will come down and go round to some of these coffee-houses with you. We——"

A deafening roar of applause. One man alone refused to join in it, and in less than a moment he was hustled off his feet, trodden upon, spat at, kicked, his clothes torn, and his face smeared with dirt and blood. Then they left him alone, at the stern command of the man who was going to give them food. One of them, indeed, was merciful enough to lift him up and prop him against a railing before he hurried after his fellows. There he remained until a policeman put him in a cab and had him taken, more dead than alive, to his chambers.

That was a strange crowd which trudged along after Lord Hadley through the early morning streets. Eager-looking women, with children running by their sides, or clasped in their arms; gaunt, hollow-eyed men, with a wolfish glare in their eyes; rogues, vagabonds, the scum of the earth. And yet, as at each coffee-house they came to (after a brief interview with the proprietor, during which they waited quietly outside) Lord Hadley passed some of them in, and told them that they were free to eat as much as they would, there was not one who failed to thank him with trembling, eager voice. And somehow, when it was all over, and, tired out, he found himself free to return to the house, the memory of those starving, grateful voices seemed to him like the memory of the sweetest music he had ever heard. It had all been a trick to get himself out of an awkward scrape, to get rid of them; but he felt that out of folly good had come. He had been bored, sated with pleasure-seeking, and had sought, in a mad adventure, for a new sensation. By chance he had gained it, and it remained with him. It led him on in the future to plead in the House of Lords for the people as very few peers had ever done. It led him on to the prosecution of great schemes, to the accomplishment of many designs of practical philanthropy. It won for him a name adored by those for whom he toiled, respected and admired by the whole nation; and it won for him a wife whose name is written side by side with his in the hearts of the toilers and workers of the great city in which they live. He has had a long life and a happy one, but never happier, he says, than when Flora Saville and he walked home hand-in-hand through the leafless trees of Bradgate Park, on the day after his first good deed, when she had whispered the word which most of all others he longed to hear.



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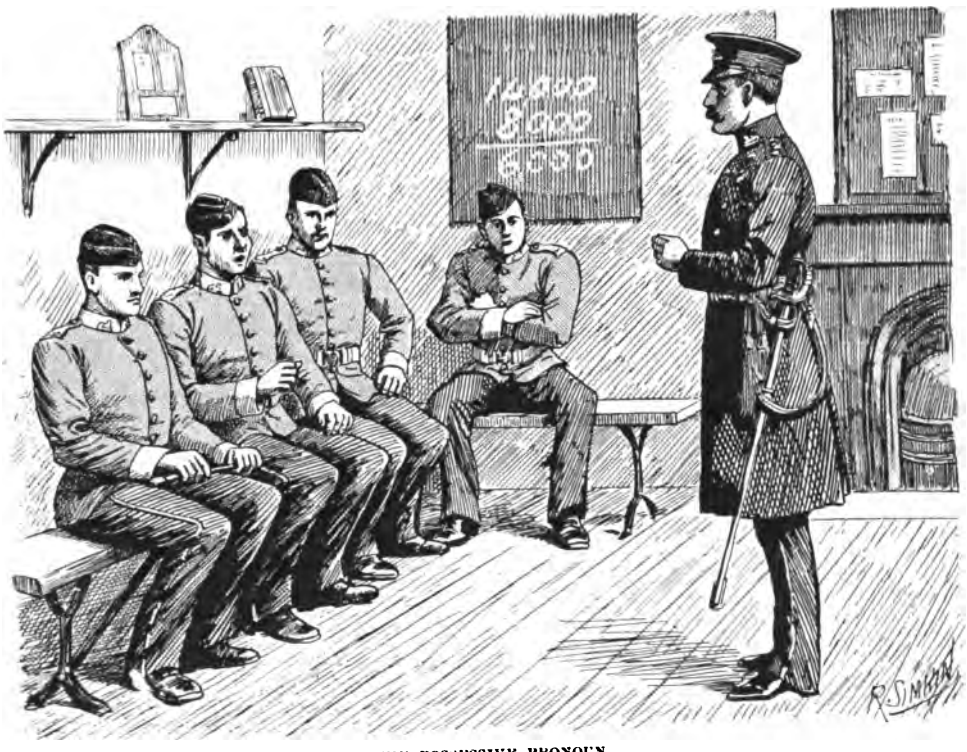

THE POSSESSIVE PRONOUN.

CAPTAIN JONES (giving a short lecture to the recruits of his company on their demeanour in public): Suppose a civilian should make offensive remarks to soldiers in a public-house, and try to induce a quarrel. The well-conducted soldier should drink up his beer and go quietly away.
(After his address he questions his audience, to ascertain if they have comprehended his remarks.) Now, Private Jenkins, what should you do if you were in an inn, and a civilian wanted to quarrel with you?

PRIVATE JENKINS: I should drink up his beer, sir, an' 'ook it!

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

ELEGY ON THE SAD DEATH OF ROSALIE.

Fair Rosalie is then as nought!
Though she had lost two legs, one arm
We never for a moment thought
She'd come to any serious harm.
Those predeceased in days gone by:
What of the rest remaineth now?
A broken nose—one languorous eye,
Some portions of that waxen brow.

Mourn, Elsie!—I had almost said,
"Mourn Elsie, Lucie, Tillie, too";
But for that error oft have paid:
At any rate, mourn all of you.
Thou, too, withal, O nameless fair,
With long black eyes and olive skin,
And strange coiffure of peaked hair—
A Japanese, in origin.

For Rosalie among you all
Shone, as the moon among the stars.
What cheek so smooth can one recall,
Save for some accidental scars?
What hair, so fashionably light?
Her own—so far as one could trace.
What eye, so speaking and so bright?
I mean, when resting in its place.

Oft in perambulator green,
And sometimes with a parasol—
The first yclept her palanquin—
A very lady, not a doll.
Oft, as I said, in solemn state,
My mistress wheeled her forth to roam;
Though somewhat oft, I note, of late,
The maid has had to wheel her home.

Oft, too, alas! head down she hung—
Though scarce that posture were preferred;
Oft by that single member swung,
And yet she never once demurred.
Ah, Rosalie! those patient pains
At last have ending; may the ground
Lie lightly on your poor remains—
Or such of them as can be found!

C. H. St. L. Russell.

TRIAL BY PHRENOLOGY.

MRS. BROWN-JOHNSON gave a dinner party, and to the party came Mr. Barstow, portly, hale, with glossy locks, accompanied by the lovely maiden of his somewhat belated choice; and sweet laughter rang along the hall—that is, the dining-room.

Now, when the feast had run many of its courses, Mrs. Brown-Johnson remarked to the company at large: "I have a little surprise for you after dinner. I have a phrenologist coming, and he shall tell you all your fortunes."

Without inquiring too deeply whether the telling of fortunes was the true function of a phrenologist or not, the male guests said "Splendid!" and the ladies asked Mrs. Brown-Johnson how ever she managed to be so overflowing with brilliant and

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THE CHRISTMAS PARTY.

"Now, Jack, will you be the whistle to our express train?"
"Awfully sorry! Can't whistle—eaten too much."

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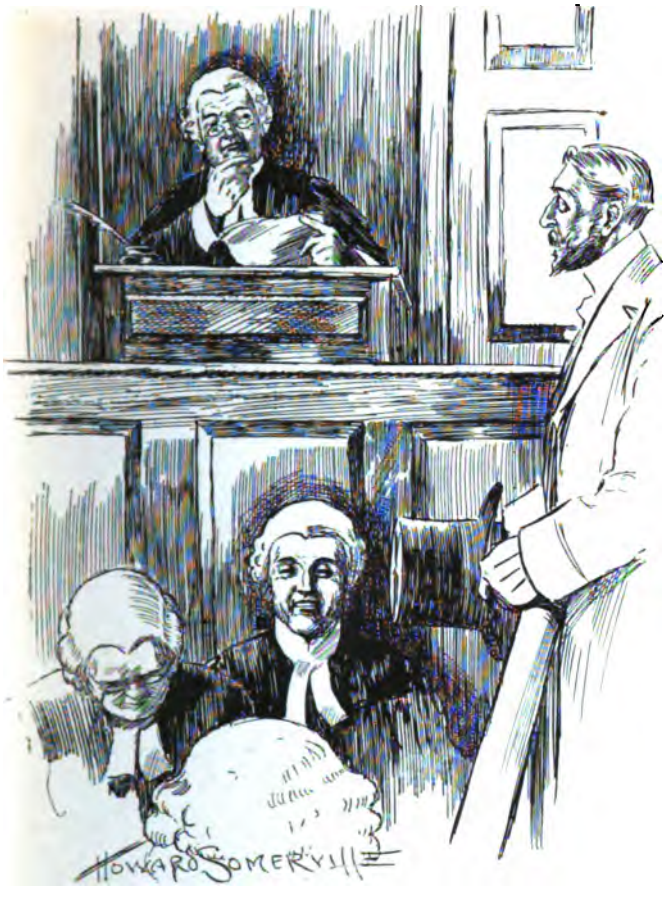

A QUESTION OF TERMS.

JUDGE: Now, plaintiff, are you the vendor or the vendee in this action?
PLAINTIFF: I am the vendee—the person *sold*, my lord!

original ideas. But Mr. Barstow looked vaguely uneasy.

The conversation naturally rushed into the new channel, and flowed there easily, until Mrs. Brown-Johnson gathered her flock about her and bore them off, telling her husband he must not be long, because they were all eagerness to hear what the phrenologist had to say; and all the while Black Care appeared to be at Mr. Barstow's back. The talk was still of lumps and bumps, until the last man put down his cigarette; but Mr. Barstow entered into it not at all, and once outside the dining-room door he seemed to be making a wild effort to escape.

Mr. Brown-Johnson, however, misreading the effort as the outcome of a fervent desire to rejoin the lovely maiden, bustled him upstairs and thrust him gaily into the drawing-room.

Then the men sat down and cheerfully submitted to the pummelling of their heads, for having dined they did not greatly care; nor was there anything particular to care about, for their virtues and excellencies apparently arose in domes, whilst any faults that made themselves felt were of the most venial and lovable variety. This one was too generous, could never say "No"; that one was too proud, too sensitive; the other was likely to be a source of danger to the fair sex, and so on.

Mr. Brown-Johnson's hospitality was spread upon his cranium in lumps, and Mrs. Brown-Johnson, the only lady who consented to be tested, had, it seemed, almost a monopoly in tact. When you come to think of it, what qualities could be more desirable in a host and hostess?

Everyone said it was wonderful.

Whenever anybody said: "Now, Barstow, you go next," Mr. Barstow was almost vehement in the politeness with which he insisted that someone else should sit down before him; and it might have been observed that each time he was asked, he edged further and further to the end of the room, until he was half among the curtains.

There Mr. Brown-Johnson's eye fell on him.

"Now, Barstow, you must be done," he said with cheerful insistence.

"I'd rather not," said Mr. Barstow.

"Oh! come along," said the host. "What's the odds? Are you a conscientious objector?"

A laugh that seemed peculiarly meaningless to Mr. Barstow followed the sally.

"I—I'd rather not," he repeated, and got rather red.

Mr. Brown-Johnson glanced at the lovely maiden, who was looking somewhat annoyed, and suggested with a merry wit that there might be "danger ahead." Now it had already struck the lovely maiden that her swain had fears of some secret characteristic—as that he was bigamous, mean, or inclined to insanity—being revealed beneath the hand of the phrenologist, so she whispered something to Mr. Barstow which was generally supposed throughout the room to be in the nature of an ultimatum.

So Mr. Barstow rose amid plaudits and advanced towards the chair—walking delicately. As he sat down, he whispered something hurriedly to the phrenologist, who said loudly: "I beg your pardon, sir."

Mr. Barstow did not repeat his remark; he frowned and said: "Go on." The young man, with whom earnestness did duty for education, passed his fingers rapidly over Mr. Barstow's head and began in a swift monologue:—

"I 'ave 'ere a 'ead of remarkable characteristics; it's owner will be successful in life in wotever 'e sets 'is mind on doin', fond of good livin' an' enjoyin' to the full the pleasures of socity in which 'e is in especial hadapted to shine, the really

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"BIRDS ARE 'HEALTHY' THIS YEAR."

BINKS: Very strange! Did nothing drop?
SPINKS: Don't think so. Haven't heard that any of the birds about here have heart disease, anyway!

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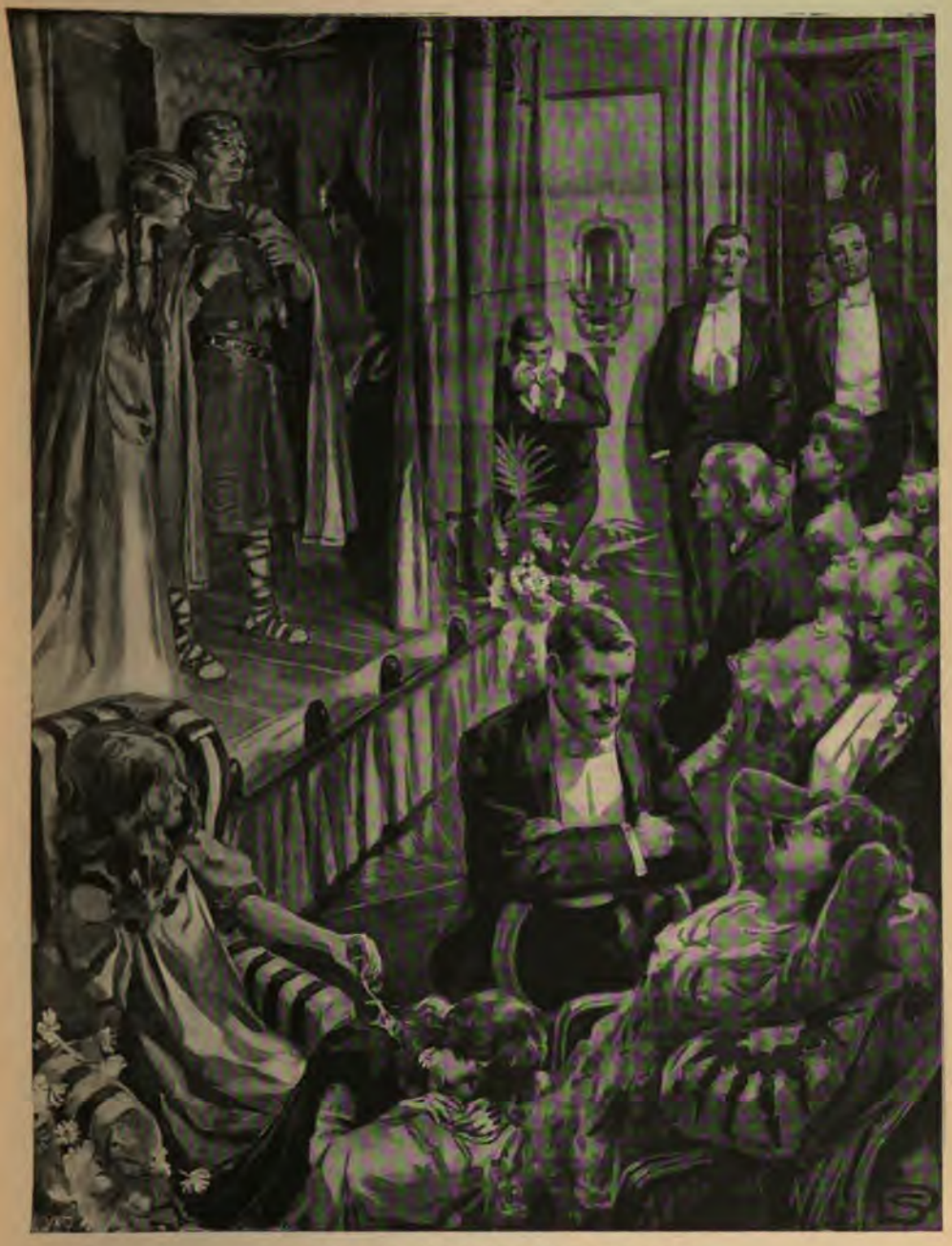

"WHAT OUR AMATEURS HAVE TO FACE."

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM MISS DOROTHY MAINWARING TO HER BOSOM FRIEND:—

"Of course there were theatricals. The play we chose was 'Macbeth,' as both Maisie and I are best in tragedy. I was Lady Macbeth. Mamma invited Mr. Jones, the famous critic, down for the performance. All went well until the end of the first act; when, just as I was explaining to Captain Hamilton that he must 'screw his courage to the sticking place,' that stupid Bertie turned on the electric light."

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THE ONLY WAY.

THE MINISTER: Aye, aye, I must gie it oop!
FRIEND: What, golf?
MINISTER: Na, na—t' meenistry. Yon game makes me sweer sae!

dominant feature of 'is nature is thoroughness and sincerity, 'e is reel from the top of 'is 'cad to——" (the phrenologist paused, his hand upon the forepart of Mr. Barstow's head, and a puzzled look came over his face, while consternation deepened on that of Mr. Barstow) "—the 'eel of 'is foot, enny sham is 'ateful to 'im."

To the wondering eyes of the audience Mr. Barstow's hair seemed gradually verging on Mr. Barstow's eyebrows.

"'E will ——"

The hair shot suddenly back—far back—and the young man looked still more puzzled; he continued, however, in a faint voice—

"'E will——"

This time the hair was observed to make a rapid turning movement over Mr. Barstow's left ear. The lovely maiden began to sob.

"—stoodiously avoid all——" went on the young man wonderingly.

Again the hair shot forward. The young man was heard to mutter in a low voice, "Snakes!"

Then something fell: was caught and rescued by the phrenologist. It was Mr. Barstow's *toupée*.

H. W.

HARASSED CORRESPONDENT: Oh! what is Mr. Jones's initial?

JUNIOR CLERK: I can't think, sir—— What is his other name?

NEW CURATE, TO THE RECTOR: Do the people here ever ask you to let them have the notes of your sermons?

RECTOR: No. Have they been asking for yours?

CURATE (with pride): They have, sir.

RECTOR: Who has asked you?

CURATE: The Inspector of Nuisances.

'LIZA OF LAMBETH LOQUITUR.
"Chick! More like an old 'en, ain't it, Sal?"

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CLEMATIS.

FROM A PAINTING BY NORMAN HIRST.

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THE HOTWELLS DUEL.

By "Q."*

FROM the Memoirs of Joshua Frampton, Esq., late Honorary Physician to the Wells, and Surgeon :—

I cannot pass this year 1790 without speaking of a ridiculous adventure which, but that it providentially happened at the close of our season, when the Spa was emptying, and our fashionables talked more of packing their trunks than of the newest scandals, might have done me some professional damage, besides bringing unmerited public laughter upon the heads of two honest gentlemen. As it was, our leading news-sheet, the *Hotwells Courant*, did not even smoke the affair, and so lost a nine days' wonder; while the Whig *Examiner*, after printing an item which threw me into a two days' perspiration, forbore to follow up the scent — the reason being that Mr. Lemoine, its editor, was shortly expecting an addition to his family, and, knowing his nervousness upon these occasions and his singular confidence in my skill, I was able to engage him by arguments to which at another time he might have listened less amiably.

"This apparition on my doorstep surprised me."

I have already related how, on the approach of autumn, I advertised for an assistant The young man whom I selected was a Scotsman from the University of Glasgow, Duncan MacRea by name, and no youth of his age could have brought better testimonials to ability or character. Relying upon these, I did not stand out for an interview — his home lying so far away as Largs, in Ayrshire — but came to terms at once, and he arrived at my door with his valise at the untimely hour of five in the morning, the fifteenth of October, having travelled all the way to Bristol in a ship laden with salted herrings.

I will own that this apparition on my doorstep in the cold morning light (he had rung the night-bell) surprised me somewhat. But I remembered the proverbial impetuosity of Scotsmen in pushing their fortunes, and his personal appearance may have helped to conciliate me, since my mind had misgiven me that I had done wiser to insist on an interview, instead of buying a pig in a poke ; for looks no less than knowledge are a physician's *passe-partout* among the ladies who bring their ailments to our provincial spas. The face which the lad lifted towards my bedroom window was a remarkably handsome one, though pallid, and the voice in which he an-

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swered my challenge had a foreign intonation, but musical and in no way resembling the brogue for which I had been preparing myself.

So delighted was I at this dissipation of my fears that, slipping on my dressing-gown (I believe without removing my nightcap), and pausing only on the landing to call up to the maidservants to light a fire and prepare coffee with all speed, I hurried downstairs and unbarred the door. Whereupon Master MacRea instantly and with great frankness shook me by the hand.

"It is a great pleasure to me, Dr. Frampton, to make your acquaintance, more especially, sir, to find you surrounded by those evidences of a prosperous practice which I had indeed inferred from your genteel reticence and the quality of your notepaper. At the end of a long journey, undertaken on the strength of that inference, it is delightful to find my best hopes confirmed."

He shook me by the hand again very warmly. Taken aback by this extraordinary address, I gasped once or twice, and even then could find nothing better to say than that he must have found his journey fatiguing.

"Fatiguing, perhaps, but not tiresome. To the philosophic mind, Dr. Frampton, there should be no such thing as tedium, boredom, *ennui*, and I trust that mine is philosophic. You were much in my thoughts, sir, between the attacks of sea-sickness. By frequent perusal I had committed your two epistles to memory, and while silently rehearsing their well-turned sentences, in the words of Dr. Samuel Johnson I pursued in imagination the pleasures of hope, yet without listening to the whispers of credulity—for I was prepared to find your flattering description fade upon a nearer prospect. But I am reassured!"

Positively he shook hands for a third time. Confound the fellow! I had merely hinted that my patients, or the most of them, were of good social position, and had offered him board and lodging, with a salary of forty pounds, rising five pounds annually.

"And by Heavens!" he exclaimed, spinning round on his heel at a sound of hasty footsteps crossing the square, "here comes fresh confirmation! A black manservant—and, as I live, in a gold-laced hat! Of such things I have read in books, but how much livelier, Dr. Frampton, is the ocular appeal of reality!"

It was, to be sure, Major Dignum's black valet Gumbo, and with a note for me. The fellow's disordered dress and quick breathing spoke of urgency, and I broke the seal at once, wondering the while what could have befallen the Major, a retired and gouty West Indian whom I had been visiting daily for three months at his apartments in the Grand Pump Hotel. The missive ran:—

"My Dear Dr. Frampton,—As a friend rather than a patient, I beg you to come to me without delay. Pray ask no questions of Gumbo, who knows nothing. You will need no spurring when I tell you that though in no worse than my usual health, a few hours may see me in eternity. Confidently yours,

"Orlando Dignum (Major)."

I folded the letter and nodded to Gumbo. "Tell your master that I will delay only to shave and dress before calling on him."

The faithful fellow had been watching me anxiously. "In the name of goodness, doctor, ain't you going to tell me what's wrong?"

"I know as little as you," said I. "But, whatever it is, the Major thinks it serious; so run, my man, and say that I am following."

With something like a groan, Gumbo started off, and I turned to Mr. MacRea. "You will find a cup of coffee in your room," I said. "I must attend to this sudden call; but possibly by the time you have washed and changed, I may be free to rejoin you at breakfast, when we can talk at leisure."

The young man had caught up his valise, but set it down again and laid three fingers on my sleeve. "You speak of a change of clothes, sir. I will be frank with you—these breeches in which you behold me are my only ones. They were a present from my mother's sister, resident in Paisley, and I misdoubt there will have been something amiss in her instructions to the tailor, for they gall me woundily—though in justice to her and the honest tradesman I should add that my legs, maybe, are out of practice since leaving Glasgow. At Largs, sir, I have been reverting to the ancestral kilt."

"You'll wear no such thing about the Hotwells," I interposed.

"Indeed, I was not thinking it likely. My purpose was to procure another pair on my arrival—aye, and I would do so before breaking fast, had not circumstances which I will not detain you by relating put this for the moment out of the question. Do not mistake me, Dr. Frampton. In public I will thole these dreadful articles, though it cost me my skin; but in private, sir, if as a favour you will allow me—if, as a bachelor yourself, you will take it *sans gêne*. And, by the by,

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"Reverting to the ancestral kilt."

I trust you will not scruple to point out any small defects in my French accent, which has been acquired entirely from books."

He had, in fact, pronounced it "jeen," but I had put this by. "Quite impossible, Mr. MacRea. I have to think of the servants."

"Eh? You have servants!"

"Four or five," said I.

His eyes seemed ready to start out of his head. "I had opined by the way you opened the door with your own hand——" He broke off and exclaimed: "Four or five servants! It will be a grand practice of yours! Well, go your ways, Dr. Frampton —I must e'en study to live up to you"

Having piloted my eccentric upstairs and left him to his toilet, I lost no time in dressing and presenting myself at the Grand Pump Hotel, where I found my West Indian friend in a truly deplorable state of agitation. His face, ordinarily rubicund, bore traces of a sleepless night; indeed, it was plain that he had not changed his clothes since leaving the Assembly Rooms, where he invariably spent his evenings at a game of *faro* for modest stakes. He grasped my hand, springing up to do so from a writing-table whereon lay several sheets of foolscap paper.

"Ah! my dear friend, you are late!" was his greeting.

"I thought I had been moderately expeditious," said I.

"Yes, yes—perhaps so." He consulted his watch. "But with an affair of this sort hanging over one, the minutes drag. And yet, Heaven knows, mine may be few enough."

"Pardon me," I said, "but to what sort of affair are you alluding?"

"An affair of honour," he answered tragically.

"Eh?" I said. "A duel! You have engaged yourself to fight a duel?" He nodded. "Then I will have nothing to do with it," I announced with decision.

"Aye," said he with marked irony, "it is at such a pinch that one discovers his true friends! But fortunately, I had no sooner dispatched Gumbo in search of you than I foresaw some chance of this pusillanimity of which you give me proof."

"Pusillanimity?" I interjected. "It is nothing of the kind. But you seem to forget my position here as honorary physician to the Hotwells."

"We'll call it lukewarmness, then," he went on in yet more biting tones. "At the risk of seeming intrusive, I at once knocked up two Irish gentlemen on the landing above

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who had been audibly making a night of it while I sat here endeavouring to compose my thoughts to the calmness proper for framing a testamentary disposition. Although perfect strangers to me, they cheerfully granted what you have denied me; consented with alacrity—nay, with enthusiasm—to act as my seconds in this affair; and started to carry my cartel—which, having gone to bed in their boots, they were able to do with the smallest possible delay."

"You have not yet told me the nature of the quarrel," I suggested.

His face at once resumed its wonted colour, —nay, took on an extra tinge inclining to purple. "And I don't intend to!" he snapped.

"Then you no longer need my services?"

"Fortunately, no, since you make such a pother of granting them. Stay—you might witness my will here, to which I am about to affix my signature."

"With pleasure," said I. "But who is to be the other witness? The law requires two, you know."

"Confound it—so it does! I had forgotten. We might ring up the boots, eh?"

"Better avoid dragging the servants of the hotel into this business, especially if you would keep your intention secret. How about Gumbo?"

"He's black, to begin with, and moreover he benefits under the document to the extent of a small legacy."

"That rules him out, at any rate. Ha!" I exclaimed, glancing out of window, "the very man!"

"Who?"

"An excellent fellow at this moment crossing the Gardens towards the Mall—he is early this morning; a discreet, solid citizen, and able to keep his counsel as well as any man in the Hotwells; our leading jeweller, Mr. Jenkinson."

I turned sharply, for the Major had sunk into his chair with a groan.

"Jenkinson!" he gasped. "Jenkinson! The man's insatiable—he has been watching the hotel in his lust for blood! He threatened last night to cut my liver out and give it to the crows—my unfortunate liver on which you, doctor, have wasted so much pains. He used the most extraordinary language—not," the Major added, gripping the arms of his chair and sitting erect, "not that he shall find me slow in answering his threats."

"My dear Major," I cried, "under what delusion are you labouring? Mr. Jenkinson, believe me, is incapable of hurting a fly. You must have mistaken your man. Come and see him for yourself." And drawing him to the window, I pointed after the figure of the retreating jeweller.

"The Major's brow cleared. "No," he admitted, "that is not in the least like him. Still, he gave me his name as Jenkinson. Oh! decidedly that is not the man."

"The name is not uncommon," said I. "Excuse me, I must hurry, or he will be out of sight." And I ran downstairs and out into the street as Mr. Jenkinson disappeared around the corner. Following briskly, I brought him into sight again a moment before he turned aside into a small tavern—"The Lamb and the Flag"—half-way down the Mall.

Now "The Lamb and the Flag" enjoyed a low reputation, and for a citizen of ordinary respectability to be seen entering it at that hour—well, it invited surmise. But I knew Mr. Jenkinson to be above suspicion; he might be the ground-landlord—I had heard of his purchasing several small bits of property about the town. In short, it was almost with consternation that, following into the dirty bar, I surprised him in the act of raising a glass of brandy to his lips with a trembling hand.

I certainly took him aback, and he almost dropped the glass. "Excuse me, Dr. Frampton," he stammered, "pray do not think—this indulgence—not a habit, I assure you. Oh, doctor! I have passed a fearful night!"

"Indeed?" said I sympathetically. "If my services can be of use——"

"No, no," he interrupted, paused, and seemed to consider. "At least, not yet."

"It seems, then, that I am doubly inopportune," I said, "for I have been following you to ask a small favour—not for myself, but for a certain Major Dignum, at the Grand Pump Hotel; nothing more than the attesting of a signature—a mere matter of form."

"Major Dignum? Ah, yes! the name is familiar to me from the *Courant's* Visitors' List." Mr. Jenkinson passed an agitated hand across his forehead. "I cannot recall seeing him in my shop. By all means, doctor—to oblige the gentleman—in my unhappy frame of mind—it will be a—a distraction."

So back I led the jeweller, explaining on the way how I had caught sight of him from the hotel window; and ushered him up to the apartment where the Major sat impatiently awaiting us.

"Good morning, sir," the Major began, with a bow. "So your name's Jenkinson?

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"Mr. MacRea appeared upon the threshold."

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Most extraordinary! I—I am pleased to hear it, sir.

"Extraordinary!" the Major repeated, as he bent over the papers to sign them. "I am asking you, Mr. Jenkinson, to witness this signature to my last will and testament. In the midst of life—by the way, what is your Christian name?"

"William, sir."

"Incredible!" The Major bounced up from his chair and sat down again trembling, while he fumbled with his waistcoat pocket. "Ah, no!—to be sure—I gave it to my seconds," he muttered. "In the midst of life——"

"You may well say so, sir." The jeweller took a seat and adjusted his spectacles as I sanded the Major's signature and pushed the document across the table. "A man," Mr. Jenkinson continued, dipping his pen wide of the ink-pot, "on the point of exchanging time for eternity——"

"That thought is peculiarly unpleasant to me just now," the Major interrupted. "May I beg you not to enlarge upon it?"

"But I *must*, sir!" cried out Mr. Jenkinson, as though the words were wrested from him by an inward agony; and tearing open his coat, he plucked a packet of folded papers from his breast-pocket and slapped it down upon the table. "You have called me in, gentlemen, to witness a will. I ask you in return to witness mine—which must be, at least, ten times as urgent."

"Another will!" I glanced at the Major, who stared wildly about him, but could only mutter: "Jenkinson! William Jenkinson!"

"To-morrow, sir," pursued the jeweller, his voice rising almost to a scream, "you may have forgotten the transient fears which drove you to this highly proper precaution. For you the sun will shine, the larks sing, your blood will course with its accustomed liveliness, and your breast expand to the health-giving breeze. I don't blame you for it—oh, dear, no! not in the least. But you will admit it's a totally different thing to repose beneath the churchyard sod on a mere point of honour, or with an assassin's bullet in your heart—not to mention that he threatened to tear it out and fling it to the crows!"

"The deuce!" shouted the Major, "your heart, did you say?"

"I did, sir."

"You are quite sure! Your heart?—you are certain it was your heart? Not your liver? Think, man!"

"He did not so much as allude to that organ, sir, though I have no doubt he was capable of it."

While we gazed upon one another, lost in a maze of extravagant surmise, a riotous rush of feet took the staircase by storm, and the door crashed open before two hilarious Irishmen, of whom the spokesman wore the reddest thatch of hair it has ever been my lot to cast eyes on. The other, so far as I can remember, confined his utterances to frequent vociferous and wholly inarticulate cries of the chase.

The Major presented them to us as Captain Tom O'Halloran and Mr. Finucane.

"And we've had the divvle's own luck, Major, dear," announced Tom O'Halloran. "The blayguard's from home. Ah, now! don't be dispirited—'tis an early walk he's after takin'; at laste, that's what the slip of a gurrl towld us who answered the door; and mighty surprised she seemed, to open it to a pair of customers at such an hour. For what d'ye suppose he calls himself when he's at home? A jooler, sorr; a dirthy jooler."

"A jeweller!" I cried aloud.

"No more, no less. Says I, there's quare gentlefolks going in these times, but I don't cool my heels waitin' in a jooler's shop with a challenge for the principal when he chooses to walk in to business. So I said to the gurrl: 'You may tell your master,' I said, 'there's two gentlemen have called, and will have his blood yet in a bottle,' I said; 'but any time will do between this and to-morrow.' And with that I came away. But Mr. Finucane here suggested that, whilst we were at it, we might save time and engage the surgeon. So on our way back we rang up Dr. Frampton. No luck again; the doctor was out. Faix! early walkin' seems the fashion at this health resort. But we've brought along his assistant, if that's any use to you, and he's downstairs at this moment on the door-mat."

The captain put his head outside and whistled. Mr. Finucane assisted with a life-like imitation of a coach-horn, and Mr. MacRea, thus summoned, appeared upon the threshold.

I cannot accurately describe what followed, for the jeweller, by casting himself into my arms, engaged a disproportionate share of my attention. I believe the Major caught up a loo-table and held it before him as a shield.

* * * * *

"You see," said Mr. MacRea, that afternoon, as I escorted him to the office of the Bath Coaching Company, to book his seat

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for that city. "On arriving at the Hotwells last evening, I naturally wished, Dr. Frampton, to assure myself that your position as a medical man answered to the glowing descriptions of it in your correspondence. I could think of no better method to arrive at this than by mingling with the gay throng in the Assembly Rooms; and I deemed that to take a hand at cards at the public tables would be the surest way to overhear the chit-chat of the fashionable world, and maybe elicit its opinion of you. But alas, sir! a man cannot play at the cards without exposing himself to the risk of losing. At the first table I lost—not heavily indeed, yet considerably. I rose and changed to another table; again I lost—this time the last sixpence in my pocket. Now, it is an idiosyncrasy of mine, maybe, but I cannot lose at the cards without losing also my temper; and the form it takes with me, Dr. Frampton, is too often an incontrollable impulse to pull the winner's nose. I have argued with myself against this tendency a score of times, but it will not be denied. So, sir, last night, penniless and in a foreign land, I paced to and fro beneath the trees in front of the Assembly Rooms, and when this Mr. Jenkinson emerged, I accosted him and pulled his nose. To my astonishment he gave me a ticket and assured me that I should hear from him. Sir, we have no such practice at Largs, but it is my desire to conform with the customs of this country, especially in matters of etiquette. Consequently, after pulling the second gentleman's nose, I handed him the first gentleman's ticket, having none of my own, and being ignorant (in the darkness) that it bore the first gentleman's name. It was a mischance, sir, but so far as I can see, one that might have happened to anybody. You say that even after apologising for on reflection I am always willing to apologise for any conduct into which my infirmity of temper may have betrayed me it is impossible for me to continue here as your assistant. I am glad, then, that prudence counselled me to provide two strings to my bow, and engage myself to Dr. Mathers of Bath, on the chance that you proved unsatisfactory; and I thank you for the month's salary, which I could not perhaps claim under the circumstances as a right, but which I am happy to accept as a favour."

SOLACE.

I STROVE to bury sorrow in a crowd,
And feared to sit with memory apart—
The world, I thought, should tutor us to feel
How light a thing it is to break one's heart.

But when I left the laughing, jesting throng,
Weary, embittered by the loneliness,
And sought the firelit silence—lo, Dear Heart,
Remembrance cheered me with your own caress!

JOAN BURLEIGH.

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"A MARKEN INTERIOR." By P. VAN DER VELDEN.

MODERN DUTCH ART AND ARTISTS.

By S. R. Lewison.

With reproductions from Photographs by M. J. Parsons, Buitenhof 29, The Hague.

HOLLAND is in many ways one of the most interesting countries in Europe, her art is in a flourishing condition, and her artists are men in whom the splendid national characteristics are most strongly marked. A country whose inhabitants have had to fight in so many ways for the mere right to live, could not fail to be more than ordinarily fascinating to its intelligent inhabitants, and the patriotism of the Dutch is very much in evidence in their pictures. Not only did Holland fight for her liberty against the aggression of Spain, and take the first step in breaking up the world-power that threatened all European liberty, but a very large part of the country itself is only kept from the incursion of the sea by dint of unending labour. To the Dutchman, who lives entrenched against the rush of the sea, every field, garden, and wood in his country has associations well nigh sacred; his ancestors have fought against Nature as well as man for their preservation—naturally he becomes intensely patriotic. The Dutch artist expresses his patriotism unmistakably. He gives his life's labour to the expression of the natural beauties of his country—the great flat expanses of greenery, with canals threading them in long straight lines, and windmills on the horizon; the beach, with its fisherfolk; the sparse plantations, the curious islands of the Zuyder Zee, the frozen waters and plains associated with every winter time—one and all serve to inspire him. In the uneventful round of daily life in a country whose natural beauties, though great, are limited, he has laboured so truly, so conscientiously, and, above all, so entirely in the service of what he presents, that Holland has been raised

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"A NORTH HOLLAND CHARIOT." By OTTO EERELMAN.

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above most other European countries so far as art is concerned. Spain sends her artists to Italy; the Frenchmen of the academic schools are beyond the reach of hope and ignore Nature; except where Belgium has borrowed from the modern and independent schools of France, Belgian art is in a bad way; and no very remarkable spirit stirs the dry bones of modern art in Germany or Italy. But Holland remains vigorous and progressive in her art, full of enthusiasm and free from decadence, serving Nature, who never grows old and is always ready to tell her familiar stories in a new way.

"THE SEWING SCHOOL." By G. HENKES.

The lovers of the sea, of the farm, of the narrow, picturesque streets of old towns, of the crowded or deserted beach, of the shepherd's flocks and herds, all bring an intense application to their work; and in addition to the pictorial side of art, one is conscious of something more subtle, something belonging more especially to the æsthetic side of painting, the quality that may best be called atmosphere. Permanent interest could not long be attached to a mere record of fact, even accompanied by correct drawing, proper perspective, and pleasing colour; all great masters give their pictures a more enduring quality than any of these. Men like Mauve, Artz, Mathew Maris, and Mesdag in all their best pictures give a far more complete presentment of life. They choose their subject, select for presentment what is most vital in it, and then invest it with all the associations that belong to the country and the time. The Neapolitan children waiting for the fishing-boats' return on the hills that look out on to the Mediterranean have nothing in common with the children in the pictures by D. A. C. Artz reproduced here; the shepherd taking his flock to the homestead on the plains of Estremadura is quite another person from the shepherd in Anton Mauve's beautiful picture. These differences are not of costume, they are something deeper and wider, and the man who makes a picture entirely pictorial misses them altogether. The great majority of the modern Dutch masters whose pictures are given here know their country intimately in its many physical aspects; the dullest day has its beauties; to them the drawn-in autumn, with its mists from sea and land, its infinitely mournful aspect, is as beautiful in its own way as the brightest, most

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"WINTER LANDSCAPE NEAR DELFT." By LOUIS APOL.

"WINTER TIME." By LOUIS APOL.

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musical night of spring watched in the woods of Haarlem. The work of the fields and life of the seashore offer inexhaustible opportunities, and the best of the modern Dutchmen are masters of land and sea scape. It is probable that no country has a saner or purer national art than Holland has to-day, because the artist sits at Nature's feet, and finds no aspect of his native country's life unworthy of the best work that is in him.

In writing of modern art in Holland, it must be admitted that the qualifying adjective has been stretched to an extent that may justify criticism. Some of the greatest

"A WELCOME REST." By W. K. NAKKEN.

of the men under consideration were born in the 'thirties of the nineteenth century; a few have been dead for several years past, and the living are very old men. On the other hand, it may be urged that their best work has been done in the years that are within the recollection of the average reader whose thirtieth birthday has yet to arrive. Anton Mauve, whose work is presented here, is a case in point. Born in Zaandam the year after Queen Victoria ascended to the throne of Great Britain, he died—so far as he can die—some twelve years ago. He has few rivals among painters of sheep and cattle, and his pictures have found a wide and appreciative circle of friends not only in Holland, where they are highly prized, but in England and America. His qualities are indisputable. A master of composition and colour, he knew his country in all or most of its many moods. His work gives us something of Holland itself; full of natural sentiment, but entirely free from sentimentality; not in any way theatrical, albeit always properly pictorial. His pictures appeal to every cultured mind, but not less to the artist than to the layman. In the days of his youth, Anton Mauve was a pupil of the painter, P. F. van Os, and worked at Haarlem, where even to-day the native life preserves its pristine simplicity, and few sounds of the great world beyond Holland seem to penetrate. No fellow-countryman has yet risen to fill the place he has vacated.

Most visitors to Holland know Scheveningen, the Dutch Ostend, a gay, bustling place, with wonderful beach and ample accommodation for the thousands of visitors who patronise it during the summer months. There is a fine terrace along the Dunes, the Kursaal is the finest in Holland, and behind the town are delightful woods. Scheveningen is the Mecca of sea lovers among the Dutch artists, and very many have lived and worked there for many years past. Of the painters represented here, D. A. C. Artz, Elchanon Verveer, B. J. Blommers, and Philip Sadée have all been hard workers at Scheveningen. It is a very accessible place, easily reached by steam trams from the Hague, and the

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"COMRADES." By OTTO EERELMAN.

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beautiful beach is at its best when the *pinken* come in heavily laden with spoils of the sea, which are sold by auction forthwith. By the way, there are some unpleasant memories for Englishmen here, for outside Scheveningen the Dutch Admiral de Ruyter gave a very decisive thrashing to the allied French and English fleets, in the seventeenth century. Happily, the majority of foreign visitors have forgotten their history.

David Artz was born at the Hague in 1837, and studied under Josef Israels, the veteran Dutch painter, who is still alive.

"FAITHFUL SHEPHERDING." By ANTON MAUVE.

Artz, who died some ten years ago, lived for several years in Paris (1866–71), but Dutch scenery and fisherfolk were always more to his liking than any other subjects, and his greatest success was in their treatment. His work has a great vogue in America, where a large proportion of it is to be found to-day, most being sold direct from the exhibitions where it was first shown. Apart from the prettiness to which the great part of its popularity is due, there are very substantial qualities about the work that David Artz has left on record. Elchanon Verveer died two years ago, far in his seventies. He was a pupil of his brother, S. L. Verveer, who predeceased him, and he did most of his work at Scheveningen. The municipal authorities of the Hague bought one of his most characteristic pictures, "Old Tars," which is reproduced here, and hangs in the Municipal Gallery at the Hague, in company with some fine works by his contemporaries, including a sunrise and a storm at sea by Mesdag, and Anton Mauve's famous "Pasturage." B. J. Blommers, the last of the painters mentioned as working at Scheveningen, lives there to-day. He cannot be far off his seventieth year, and has a large following in England and America. He is a painter of interiors, a man whose development as a colorist is quite remarkable. His master in painting was Bisschop.

From Holland to Australia is a far cry, but the artist P. van der Velden, whose work is represented here, emigrated to Australia some ten years ago, when he was in his sixty-fifth year. I believe he is still alive. He had a very curious career, teaching himself to paint, and practising without any reference to established masters. Village scenes were his special study, and he did some clever pictures of interiors in the

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"GOING HOME." By ANTON MAUVE.

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island of Marken. Without being the equal of the best Dutchmen of his time, he is a clever painter, whose development has been very interesting. We may remember in this connection that the masters of the great Impressionist movement in France have been equally independent of the schools, and that they have found out by experiments what they have learned with regard to colour. While a certain amount of tuition seems necessary to teach drawing and perspective, the best painters have always been the men who preserve their independence, and having studied, ignore what they had been taught.

"WHEN THE TIDE GOES OUT." By B. J. BLOMMERS.

William Karel Nakken, best known for his pictures of horses, is another of the old painters still in the land of the living. He was born in the Hague in 1835, and studied art under Donoi. For many years he lived in Normandy, where much of his work was done. Apart from his Dutch birth, he is not a very pronounced Dutchman: his painting has treatment that recalls his French associations; but he is a popular artist in Holland and out of it. Louis Apol is a comparatively young man, having been born a little more than fifty years ago at the Hague, where he still lives. He studied in the studio of Jan Hoppenbrouwers, and is best known to-day for his winter scenes. Two splendid snow pieces are in the gallery at Amsterdam; another, by no means inferior, may be seen in the Hague Municipal Gallery. Dutchmen have always been celebrated for their snow scenes; and it is not to be wondered at, for the winter in Holland is a very real thing, yielding such an annual harvest of skating carnivals and ice festivals as we in England never know. Perhaps Lincolnshire is the only English county that gets an occasional suggestion of a Dutch winter. The observant Dutchman is accustomed to the varying aspects of an ice-bound land, whose canals and dykes are frozen over, whose work stops almost mechanically for some brief season; and the mild springs and pleasant summers give him the sense of contrast that is necessary to enable him to treat the winter with proper appreciation. The two Teniers, J. van Ruysdael, Nicholas Berckem, and A. van der Neer are perhaps the best known of the older men who gave us vivid pictures of winter life in Holland, and Louis Apol has followed worthily in their train, giving

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"THREE GENERATIONS." By D. A. C. ARTZ.

"THE FISHERMAN'S CHILDREN." By D. A. C. ARTZ.

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"PASTURAGE." By ANTON MAUVE.

us from time to time studies of the more sombre side of the season. At the same time, it may be suggested that the old methods of snow painting have not been as successful as the more modern ones. Delightful snow effects have been secured by the Impressionists, whose work is perhaps the most vivid to be seen to-day. Monet Pissarro and Sisley, in France, have done the best snow work I have seen; and a Dutchman, Yonking, whose work is not shown here, has done even finer work than Apol.

Philip Sadée was born in the same year as P. van der Velden, and, like him, had no other acknowledged master than Scheveningen beach. He lives at the Hague to-day, and a considerable proportion of his work finds its way to England. G. Henkes, who lives at Voorburg, a little way beyond the Hague, is best known as a painter of Dutch interiors. He is a native of Delftshaven, near the Hague, where he was born in 1844, and was a pupil of Spoel. Otto Eerelman, who is well known for his pictures of dogs and horses, is a native of Groningen, and lives at the Hague. He is a very popular painter, whose work has found many friends in Germany and England. Apart from the subjects chosen, there is no great interest attaching to his pictures, which are not especially remarkable for their artistic treatment.

Greater than most of the painters just mentioned, Hendrik Willem Mesdag claims and repays particular attention. He was a very old man when he died two or three months ago, having been born more than seventy years ago at Groningen. For some time he was a pupil of Alma Tadema, and he lived at the Hague, where so many of the leading Dutch artists have made their home. The sea has always been the object of his closest study, and his sea pieces are known all the world over. He has presented the sea in all its varying moods—in storm and calm, summer and winter, sunrise and midnight, sunset and high noon; and his work has the fine quality of poetry that may be seen in Anton Mauve's paintings and in the wonderful canvases of Mathew Maris. There is a characteristic sea piece in the Hague Municipal Gallery, where Bosboom's fine interior at St. Peter's at Leyden, and Verveer's "Old Tars" are hung. In the private galleries of some of the best known collectors of Europe and America one may find Mesdag's sea scenes; the painter did no other than sea work, and all the painting I have seen, whether in public or private galleries, is of a very high quality. Its standard of quality is surprising, and even in the latter days the artist's right hand did not lose its cunning. There is no more interesting figure among the modern Dutch artists, no man whose work is more justifiably esteemed. His long and devoted observation

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"OLD TARS." By ELCHANON VERVEER.

of the sea has been productive of remarkable results.

This brief survey of the painters who are rightly or wrongly called moderns does not nearly exhaust the list. There are many artists of high and well-earned repute whose work is not shown here for want of space. The veteran Josef Israels is one of them. He did work that was interesting but conventional for many years, and suddenly, when past the prime of life, painted pictures of far greater worth, two of the most notable being

"DUTCH FISH-WIVES." By P. SADÉE.

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his pictures of an old Jew in the Ghetto of Amsterdam, and of David playing before Saul. His work may be seen in the Hague (where he lives to-day), Haarlem, and Amsterdam, and he has a son who is a most promising artist. Israels is approaching his eightieth year. Jan Bosboom, who died in 1891, is another artist whose work is of a high order of merit, and there is a good collection of it in various public galleries, or in private collections, that may always be seen by artists or students who take a keen interest in painting. Yonking, to whom I have already referred, lived and worked for some time in Paris, and died some years ago. Amsterdam, Haarlem, and the Hague are full of wealthy amateurs who are devoted to art, and have in many cases been astute enough to find the best painters among their countrymen before the success of the artists outside their own country had made their pictures hard to get. Ten Kate, Jan Koster, the brothers Maris—the list might be lengthened considerably—are all artists whose works must be studied carefully by anyone who desires to receive an accurate impression of the best nineteenth century art work in Holland.

The keynote of all the work I have seen, judged in the mass, is genuine devotion to art. None of the men I have mentioned seems to desire that his own personality or mannerisms shall be obtruded, or that the artist shall be as much in evidence as the work. Their land, grey or green, a country of dunes and polders, of dykes and canals and windmills, of carefully cultivated gardens, parks, and pleasure-grounds, of high, narrow, gabled houses, red and white, is a country where cleanliness and contentment seem to go hand in hand, where a simple piety, that never becomes wearisome to the spectator, underlies and elevates the simplest life. Loungers and idlers are few and far between. The dignity of labour is never overlooked. No measure of success has availed to turn the artists from their work, or to make the best of them repeat successes for the sake of the market. And while the old men are passing, one notes with pleasure that the younger generation has inherited the best traditions, and approaches its labours with hand and eye well trained, with a full consciousness of the progress that has been made in other countries by independent workers, and a determination to benefit by what is best in it. There may not be another Rembrandt or another Franz Hals to come from Holland, but we may rest assured that there will be no lack of work that is inspired by all the best traditions of the country.

"DUTCH FISHING-BOATS IN CALM WEATHER." By H. W. MESDAG.

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STRONG MAC.

By S. R. CROCKETT.*

SYNOPSIS OF FOREGOING CHAPTERS.—The story opened in the schoolhouse of Lowran, where a great noise was proceeding from the young men's bench. It had been understood that the Ploughing Match Day was to be a holiday. It had been a holiday, indeed, since the beginning of time. But for some reason Donald Gracie, the schoolmaster, ordinarily so amenable to suggestion, had on this occasion stiffened his back and denied the request of his scholars. The riot provoked the Dominie into striking the biggest youth in the school, Muckle Sandy, who retorted by knocking the schoolmaster down and standing over him with ash-plant raised to strike. But before Muckle Sandy Ewan had time to lift his weapon, the ash-plant was wrenched out of his hand, and he received a couple of stinging cuts with the supple end of it, dealt by Adora Gracie, the schoolmaster's daughter, who then, with the aid of "Strong Mac," one of the bigger boys, proceeded to teach the school, after sending the Dominie to bed. The Dominie himself comes of ancient and distinguished stock, but has fallen on evil days through his fatal craving for drink. His daughter is now his one good influence. The opening instalment of the story closed with the parish ploughing match, in which Muckle Sandy so far proves victorious solely because Strong Mac fails to put in an appearance, he being, according to Jock Fairies, "fair daft aboot that Dominie's lassie."

CHAPTER V.

A WOMAN SCORNED.

AFTER the furious excitements of the morning the quiet of the school playground began to prey a little even upon the nerves of Strong Mac. It was not often that he thus roused himself to action; and when he did, it was generally on behalf of another. He fell to wondering listlessly where the others were, what they were doing. Presently he thought of his brother.

"That Jamie will be at the plooin' match!" he murmured, smiling at his own thought. "Wait till the afternoon. I'll warm him."

This reflection naturally took him to the master's ash-plant, in which, when in exercise upon himself, he had remarked a certain lack of the true convincing suppleness. He went into the school again and took down the emblem of authority. "Na, na," he said, shaking his head, "that's no as it should be! It ought to loup like an eel new ta'en frae a stank!"

He tried it upon his palm.

"It's sair," he said, "but it hasna the richt bite. I ken whaur to get a better."

He turned to go out again, and in the very doorway encountered the great languishing blue eyes, the tall well-rounded form and infantile curves of Miss Charlotte Webster.

"Oh, Roy! Ye are no gangin' oot because I am comin' in?" she said, with a confiding glance and a coquettish toss of her head.

"I am that!" said Strong Mac somewhat ungallantly.

The girl sighed a little, looked down at her toe making patterns in the dust of the porch, and then, glancing up at him, said: "Bide—I hae something to tell ye."

"What is't?" said Strong Mac, hanging upon one foot. "I hae an ash-plant to cut up the Holm Road."

"Oh!" said Charlotte Webster meaningly, "of course. Ye wad do onything for *her*. Ye wadna bide a minute to hear——"

"To hear what? I haena time," interrupted Strong Mac. "Lasses are that silly!"

"*She* is no silly."

"No, she's no," said Strong Mac dauntlessly. "There's no a lass in a thoosand could hae keepit the schule the day and gaen through the Muckle Laitin like yon!"

"That's no a' what lassies are guid for," said Charlotte. "There's some wad do mair than that to pleasure a bonny lad."

"Aye?" said Strong Mac impersonally.

Charlotte Webster impatiently snatched a handkerchief out of a side pocket under her little white apron and dabbed hard at her eyes as she turned away.

"Your heart's as hard——" She paused for a comparison, and none presenting itself, she concluded lamely, "as hard."

Now, in that age of frank admirations, Strong Mac had been made advances to in this way before. He was a bonny lad; there was no doubt of it. He wished the girls wouldn't, and liked Adora Gracie because she never did such things. Still, he was sorry if he had hurt anyone's feelings—even Charlotte Webster's.

"I didna mean onything, Chairlie," he said, though something told him he might live to repent the weakness.

Charlotte Webster turned sharply at the word, the white kerchief in her hand. She came and laid her fingers gently on his arm,

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and seeing that he stood still, she looked up and murmured: "Ye *are* a bonny lad!"

But this was too much for the fine mountain-bred young Spartan.

"Oh, don't maul!" he cried, dropping her hand off his cuff. "I hate maulers!"

The wide blue eyes flashed fire this time. The tears stopped welling.

"Oh! and I hate *you!*" she cried. "I will never speak to you again as long as I live!"

But Mac knew the counter for that. He had needed to use it before.

"Yes, you will," he said ungraciously, "worse luck!"

And he went out, leaving Miss Webster to dissolve into angry tears.

"I wonder how she does it?" she thought to herself afterwards. "I wish I knew. He likes her best, though she's two years younger than me, and no half as bonny."

She pulled a little mirror out of her pocket and looked long and carefully at herself. She had saved up to buy it from Packman Geordie on his last journey, and had had vast trouble in hiding it from her mother, who was a religious woman of a severe type, and did not approve of the pomps and vanities of this wicked world as exemplified in girls of sixteen carrying pocket-mirrors about with them.

Likewise Charlotte was compelled to re-tie her hair at Miss Keck's, where she left her dinner-bag on the way to school. Miss Keck—Louisa Keck—was the village dressmaker and milliner, a withered old maid with a penchant for beauty in others, whose praises had had the effect of making Charlotte Webster inordinately vain.

A moment's perusal of her own face satisfied Charlotte that her failure was not owing to anything in herself. Everything was right. Her ribbons were neatly tied, and went beautifully with her hair, which (in her mother's absence) she wore massed low in the nape of the neck, after a picture she had seen of the Empress of the French.

Charlotte smiled. It was the identical smile which Miss Keck had declared to be irresistible. Charlotte languished, and the pitifulness of the expression melted even herself. And, after all, she was despised—for whom?

For a girl of fifteen, lean as a rake, black as a crow, just because she could do sums and knew Latin. What was Latin? Did any girl ever get a sweetheart by knowing Latin? She had never heard of one, Neither had Miss Keck. Well, she could wait. After all, Roy McCulloch was but one—a boy—nothing more—not so old as herself. He might be strong. He was—yes, what was the word Miss Keck had used?—"Handsome"—that was it. But it would all come right. She would show him. Perhaps she had been too open—thrown herself at him—made herself cheap. At any rate, he was not like the others. And Miss Webster felt piqued. The attractiveness of that which we thought we were sure of, is suddenly more than doubled when we find that we are not likely to get it.

In the meantime it struck her that Roy McCulloch ought to be punished for the shameful way in which he had spoken to her. Perhaps at that moment he was away in the woods, cutting a horrid stick to strike her with. He would not think twice about that, she told herself. Perhaps he would tell right out in the school what she had said to him. He was capable of such treachery. Had he not threatened about the carrying of the milk—no, that was not Roy, that was James; but Roy must have seen, and then cast it up to her in public.

She rose and went on tiptoe to his school-bag. It lay in the covered desk which Roy shared with his brother and Jock Fairies. There was a little puzzle lock of string on it. But Jamie McCulloch, in an hour of expansion, had shown her the secret. So she opened it now, after a little puckering of her smooth brows.

There was a gleam of something ruddy under the fat flap of the brown leather bag. She poked cautiously to see if it would prove to be alive. Then she slid the strap round, and lo! a beautiful pheasant lay before her. He had been shot under the wing, and a red drop came off on her finger as she turned him over.

"Ugh, nasty!" said Charlotte, shuddering at the sight of blood. She looked further. In another compartment lay a little flask of something that rattled. Oh, she knew. These were pellets of lead with which men killed birds. Then she unrolled several bullets wrapped in a place by themselves. Here was wadding, and here—in an old dun-coloured leathern flask—*powder*. Oh! if only she could make it go off at the right time and frighten him—that is, without hurting him very much! That would pay him out for his insolence. But she did not know the way to do it safely.

Ah! she had it. She knew what would make him sorrier. So she carefully carried the powder-horn to the water-spout where

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"'My faith! ye are bonnier than ever!' he cried."

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the children drank, round the corner of the school. She took the chained iron cup, and prising up the little measuring lever of the cut-off, she poured half a cupful into the flask and gave it a shake.

"There," she said, with malicious glee, "that will learn Roy McCulloch no to think himsel' sae clever anither time. And he will find oot by and by that he may learn ither things frae lasses forbye Laitin!"

Which certainly in due course Strong Mac did indeed discover.

Then, having made these thoughtful arrangements, Miss Charlotte Webster shut the school door behind her and went up the village street to pour her troubles into the sympathetic ear of Miss Louisa Keck.

She had hardly reached the main road when she saw two men advancing from the direction of the village. One of them she knew as Jonathan Grier, the head keeper of the Kells Range estates and forests. The other, a youngish bearded man, was unknown to her.

Jonathan, the keeper, stopped and hailed her. He was in some distant way related to her mother, and on more than one occasion had shown himself not unanxious to call himself cousin. And as he was a well-looking unmarried man, Charlotte had not been too particular as to genealogies.

"My faith! ye are bonnier than ever!" he cried, with the rough country-bred geniality which in such cases passes for wit.

Charlotte tossed her head and asked him how that might concern him.

He replied that it concerned him a great deal, if the thought of her kept him from getting his natural sleep in the shooting season.

"And a' thae poachers to watch, too," he added. "I can tell ye, Cousin Chairlie, that a puir game-watcher canna afford to hae his head filled wi' thochts o' bonnie lassies at this time o' the year, wi' the pheasants to keep an e'e on, and the deer coming doon aff the hills in droves."

A sudden temptation to astonish the head keeper took hold on Charlotte Webster, mingled with an indignant sense of the difference between his treatment of her and that of—the Other. She looked back at the schoolhouse. There was Adora Gracie hanging out something on a clothes-line. The girl stood clear and graceful against the sky on the top of the knoll above the trees. As Charlotte looked, she waved her hand to someone whom the watcher could not see across the fields. Of course, Charlotte knew who that must be. Suddenly her mind was made up.

"If I tell ye something," she said to Keeper Jonathan, "ye'll say, sure as daith, that ye will never tell that I telled ye?"

The keeper, rather astonished, gave the promise, glancing after his companion a little anxiously as he did so. The bearded man had walked on a little way.

"And him?" continued Charlotte, pointing also to the young grey-eyed man.

"Oh! I will answer for him," said the keeper, laughing.

"Weel," said Woman Scorned, "if ye want to ken whaur some o' your Lowran pheasants wander to, ask Roy McCulloch, o' the Back Hoose o' the Muir, to show ye his bag the nicht as he gangs hame frae the schule."

The men looked quickly at each other.

"Roy McCulloch—who's he?" said the bearded man, speaking for the first time as he walked towards them, switching his leg with a Malacca cane.

"A son of that infernal poacher up on the Oot Muir!" exclaimed Jonathan. "I would gie a pound note oot o' my sax mouths' wage if I could grip him—aye, or ony o' the clan o' them!"

The men went on, intent upon their talk, without so much as thanking Charlotte.

The young woman stood sulking, and then, instead of going in to see Miss Keck, turned up the Holm Road in the direction of the ploughing match.

Perhaps it began to dawn upon her that she had better have ignited the powder at once, than set such a fuse alight, and timed it to explode as Roy McCulloch took his way homewards to the solitary cot of the House of Muir.

CHAPTER VI.

GREAT WAS THE FALL THEREOF.

To seek a fit and proper ash-plant, Roy McCulloch went over the dyke at the old smithy and held up the burnside into the Holm plantations. Here he soon made choice of half-a-dozen shoots, supple, tough, resilient, mightily convincing to the natural palm.

With one of these in his hands to trim as he walked along, and the rest in a bundle underneath his arm, Strong Mac sauntered whistling towards the main road. Instinctively he took a short cut at right angles to his former path, and presently, as fate would have it, he came out upon the woody ridge

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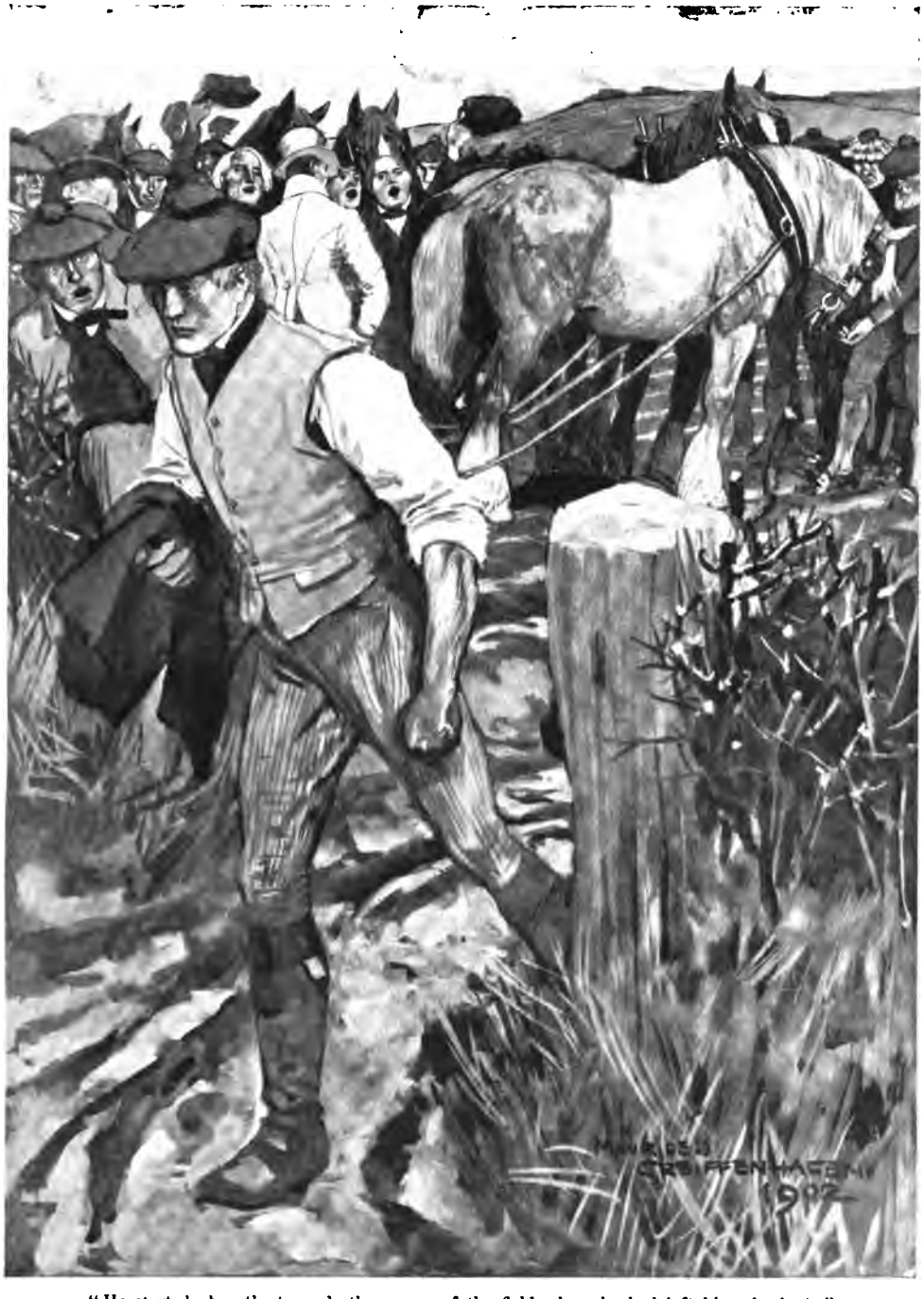

"He started abruptly towards the corner of the field where he had left his ash-plants."

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which faces the battleground of the Benty Rigs.

The shouts and encouragements of the rival ploughmen, the clinking of accoutrements, the stir and movement of the people looking on, took all the boy in Roy McCulloch by the throat. He stood mechanically paring and polishing his scholastic tools, but all his eyes were upon the scene before him. To a boy from the wild moor solitudes it seemed as if the whole world were present at his feet.

Hardly could he restrain himself. His fingers itched for the firm hard grip of the plough-stilts, for the tug and strain of the horses, to feel the nervous twitch of the far-controlling reins. It was in his heart that he could plough as well or better than any man there. He had spent the previous winter and spring as "orra" or odd man on the large farm of Craig Ronald, at the foot of the mountain on which his father's cot was placed. The regular practitioner had been taken ill, and Roy McCulloch had not only undertaken his work, but had so improved upon it, both in speed and quality, that his furrows had become a source of satisfaction and pride to his master, and of envying and grieving to his professional peers.

As Roy stood there watching, his blood stirring oddly within him, keen for conflict, emulous of fame, he grew conscious of the cries of "Strong Mac! Strong Mac!" with which the sight of his figure was greeted from the field of battle.

But it was not till Jock Fairies came charging down upon him—so hastily that in scrambling over he brought down half-a-dozen stones from the road dyke—that he paid any attention to them. Roy McCulloch thought they were uttered mockingly because he had forbidden the school to go near the ploughing match.

"Oh, Mac!" panted Jock, tremulous with excitement, "come quick! for Heeven's sake haste ye, or Muckle Sandy Ewan will carry awa' the Single-handed frae Lowran—that has been oors for twenty years. They hae your auld turn-oot frae Craig Ronald waitin' for ye. Oh! haste ye—haste ye fast! Oh! the disgrace—onybody but Sandy Ewan! Cast your coat and to it, Strong Mac! For the honour o' Lowran and to stop Muckle Sandy frae crawin' a' the days o' his life!"

"But—but," said Roy, a little dazed by the pour of words, "I hae promised to be at the schule when the bell rings. It's me that helpit the lass to keep it this mornin', sae that they wadna tak' it frae her faither as they threepit they wad do the last time."

"I ken—I ken," said Jock; "but oh, man, hearken! There's only yae rig o' bonny grund to ploo—the last but twa, and ye'll hae it feenished lang afore the afternoon. Come on!"

The eagerness for contest latent in every man took Strong Mac at unawares.

He was so easily victor in wrestling, putting the stone, and other diversions, that this seemed suddenly something well worth trying for. He moved irresolutely down the slope, strode over Jock Fairies' gap and stood in the road. By this time his old master, Mr. Charteris of Craig Ronald, was waving an arm to him to hasten. He could see the arched backs and shining flanks of Adam and Eve, his old working team, and that fired him more than anything else.

"Haste ye, Roy!" cried the farmer of Craig Ronald; "they're waiting. Cast your coat!"

The tempter triumphed. Roy threw down his rods, trimmed and untrimmed, under the dyke and ran hastily to the plough. The man in charge yielded it with a grin.

"I'm no man for't—try you! Ye're welcome," he said. "Haud her, man, haud her straight—for the honour o' auld Lowran!"

Adam and Eve turned to look over their shoulders at the sound of Roy's step. He went about them once carefully to get the harness buckles to his mind, patted both of them on their moist noses, was snuffed and blown all over with evident satisfaction, and went back to the ploughtail with a bounding heart.

"Roy McCulloch! *Next!*" cried the starter in a stentorian voice.

"Strong Mac! Strong Mac for Lowran!" shouted half-a-dozen, led by the now almost frantic Jock Fairies, who danced about in his eagerness "like a hen on a hot girdle."

And the next moment Strong Mac felt the *riss-ss-ssp* of the entering blade, the halt and heave as the iron took the full deep furrow, and then—he was half way up the field before he knew it. The shouting sank behind him. He felt the fresh potent smell of the newly turned earth in his nostrils.

It went to his head like wine. His heart had been thundering in his ears, but now there fell upon him a strange calm. Adam and Eve were working with tempered steadiness. The rich brown soil fell away as easily as blue water before the prow of a boat.

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Strong Mac felt the power within him. His very soul went into the steel of his wrist muscles.

He was breasting the little undulation of the ridge when Muckle Sandy passed him, bending to his task with plentiful energy. As he caught sight of Roy McCulloch he seemed to lose grip for a moment in his astonishment. The plough bounded as from a hidden stone, and the broad sheen of the polished iron showed a moment above the dull Indian red of the soil.

But neither spoke. Both were far too intent on their work. It chanced, however, that at that moment the three judges were quite near. They had completed their task of judging the first portion of the match, though their decision was as yet kept a profound secret, locked beneath their hat-brims. One of the two farmers noticed the leap of Sandy Ewan's ploughshare. He walked to the spot down one of the narrow causeways of green still left, fast diminishing, among the long red parallels of the ploughed land.

"What was the maiter wi' young Ewan?" he said to the other two; "there's nae stane there!'"

But the truth was that all unexpectedly Muckle Sandy had come upon an obstacle worse than any stone in the way of his progress cup-wards.

After the second turn at the starting-place there was no more shouting among the crowd, only a three-quarter circle of intent faces, all bent upon the performance of work in which every man present was an expert.

Wise heads were cocked to the side, as it were to taste the competed furrow. Eyes shrewd and grey followed the next grip and take of the share as the teams drew steadily away. Surely Britannia never ruled the waves so straightly as these grey-shining keels the undulating acres of the Benty Rigs!

It was over. Strong Mac took his team out of the appointed place, drew up at the dykeside, patted Adam and Eve, gave them a first rub with a borrowed cloth—and—came to himself.

The school—Adora Gracie—his promise!

He was shamed, disgraced. Never could he look her in the face again. Not at all in the way of love-making or love-feeling. He never thought of that, but as one to be trusted, a man of his word!

Already the judges were walking up and down, pacing, measuring, consulting. The two farmers stood meditatively scratching their chins. The smart young laird was voluble of whispers, alternately sprightly and dramatic in attitude.

But all suddenly Roy McCulloch had no pleasure in aught that he had done. He started abruptly towards the corner of the field where he had left his ash-plants. He tucked them mechanically under his arm, vaulted determinedly into the road, and marched gloomily off in the direction of the schoolhouse of Lowran.

He heard but heeded not the shouting behind him.

"*Come back—hey, there! Mac! Strong Mac! Roy McCulloch! Come back!*"

But Mac, deep in the shame of his soul, never even turned his head. He heard the patter of feet behind him, and presently Jock Fairies dashed up with something in his hand.

"Come back!" he said. "Man, ye hae won the cup! I heard them gie it oot! Ye are to come back for the judges to do something—I forget—'congregation' ye, I think they said!"

"I'm no gaun back nane!" said Roy, strengthening his negative in the French manner, which is also good Scots.

"Faith, then," said Jock, "I was thinkin' that. Ye are a dour hound. Sae I just fetched it. It was my faither had the buyin' o't. Hae—tak' it! It's guid stampit silver!"

"Throw it ower the dyke!" growled Strong Mac. "I'm shamed for ever!"

Jock Fairies gaped at him with growing doubts of his sanity.

"Glory!" he cried, "I wad gie a' my ain siller an' half o' my faither's to be shamed in the same way. Man, do ye ken that ye are the only man that has keepit Lowran frae being het-faced in disgrace this day? For the match has been gi'en against us. And if Sandy Ewan had won the Single-handed, no a man o' us wad ever hae been able to haud up his head again."

"But I promised—I was to keep the schule! Me that garred them a' promise. Me to gang to the plooin' match!"

The son and heir of the farmer of Holm gasped.

"The schule?" he cried; "what's aboot the schule? Ye can gang to the schule ony day. But the Single-handed! To beat a' Lowran and Kirkanders!"

"It's no the schule—it's my passed word!" said Strong Mac hopelessly.

"Hoots!" said Jock Fairies, "it's only to a lassie. Juist flairdie (coax) her a wee and it will be a' richt!"

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"No, it winna," said Strong Mac grimly. Then after a pause he added: "I'm gaun back. Sae are you!"

Jock Fairies turned, as if to flee at the word.

"Deil a step!" he cried dourly. "What do ye tak' me for, Roy McCulloch? The wale o' the fun is to come!"

"I'll tak' ye back to the schule—we'll hae some fun there, you an' me!" said Strong Mac darkly.

Jock Fairies, with the vision of the cold collation waiting on the judges and selected friends in his father's dining-room, tried a bolt and rush. But Strong Mac had him by the collar in a moment.

"Nane o' that," he murmured between his teeth, as he shook him fiercely. "It was you that made me forget, and it's you that's gaun to gar me mind!"

"Weel," answered Jock Fairies, "ye needna joggle the head off my body, at ony rate. I declare I'm like a red thistle wi' its neck broken!"

To this Strong Mac made no reply, and the two marched silently abreast to the schoolhouse door. Jock was carrying the Single-handed cup carefully, as became the bearer of a trophy. Also he had news to tell. On the whole he was a happy boy. Ah! if he had but known, neither pride nor minted gold would have tempted him to cross the threshold of the Lowran School.

"Open the door!" Strong Mac ordered his companion.

"Gang in?"

Jock Fairies entered, holding the cup in his hands proudly, as if it had been the day of the annual "presentation," when the bairns requited their master with gifts for his attentions of the year.

The close school scent of many breathings and much damp clothes met them full, as well as a curious waiting hush. Adora Gracie was at the desk with a book in her hand. She did not look at the pair as they came in. But the school made up for this by gazing open-mouthed.

Deil McRobb emitted a little whinny of apprehension as his eye fell on the supple ash-plants under Strong Mac's arm. He had a presentiment, which in his own mind amounted to certainty, that he was destined to make closer acquaintance with some of these.

With an inflexible determinate hand upon Jock's collar, Strong Mac shoved his companion up in front of the master's desk, in which stood Adora, the book still in her hand.

"Stan' there, an' dinna ye budge!" he ordered.

"The cup—the Single-handed! Oh, lads, he's won it! Strong Mac's won it!"

As these words left his lips, Jock Fairies received a buffet on the side of his head which almost made him drop the trophy.

"Maister," said Strong Mac clearly, so that all the school could hear, "I hae dune wrang—I forgot mysel'—me that promised to help ye—to stan' at your richt hand. I was temptit. I gaed to the plooin' match—me an' Jock Fairies. But we hae comed back, me and him—*and thae!*"

He held out the new ash-plants in both hands, and as Adora did not take them, he piled them on the front of the desk above the zinc-covered ink-well.

"But I hae thocht what to do," he went on. "There's Jock that first did wrang, for he was yonder and he temptit me. And there is me, that should hae kenned the better, for it was me that forbade the schule to gang to the Benty Rigs. Noo, ye are the maister. It should be you that should thresh us. But we are muckle and ayont your strength to gar mind. This is what we will do. I'll undertak' to make Jock here be vexed for his misdeeds, and he'll do the same for me. Time aboot!"

He handed Jock Fairies one of the supple ash-plants, giving it a preliminary swish through the air to test its capacities. Then he selected one himself, slightly more at random. Jock Fairies looked astonished and laughed a little inanely.

"It'll be juist fun," he whispered a little uncertainly.

"Aye, juist fun! Haud oot yer hand!" said Strong Mac, in an even voice.

"No—you first," said Jock Fairies, as a guarantee of good faith.

Jock raised the rod and with a sort of giggle brought it down on his companion's hand, saving the stroke at the end in a way known to boys.

Roy McCulloch received no more than the tap of a rat's tail.

"Your time," he said, with a grimness which might have warned his comrade.

Jock Fairies held out his own hand and received a stinger that drew an involuntary yell from him.

"There's no fair!" he cried; "I only hit you in fun."

"Did ye?" said Strong Mac, "then the mair fule you! This is to gar you an' me mind the Lowran plooin' match a' the days of oor lives!"

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"A man, at business with a drawer in the corner, uttered a sharp startled cry."

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There was no doubt about the sincerity of Jock's intentions when next he smote. Vengeance whistled shrill in his ash-plant.

"That's some better!" said Strong Mac, with a short indrawing of the breath.

Twenty apiece was the count and tale of their mutual penance. Everyone was satisfied—the school specially so. Those who chanced to be absent said they would rather have missed a hundred ploughing matches than this historic holocaust.

"What a lickin'!" was the general verdict, given with a delightful shiver.

Afterwards Jock Fairies was called upon to give his experiences.

"It was like this," he said: "At the very first I didna think Mac was in earnest. But after that I warned him. He owned himsel' that my sixth and fourteenth were fine and searchin' to the conscience. An' mind ye, that was a heap for Strong Mac to allow!"

"An' what ye gat—was it awfu' sair?" they asked.

Jock Fairies silently exhibited his palms.

"I'll no be able to lift a preen* aff the floor for a day or twa—I'm thinkin'!" he said, not without some reasonable pride.

CHAPTER VII.

BOUND HAND AND FOOT WITH GRAVE-CLOTHES.

"FATHER," Adora Gracie said, coming gently to the old man's bedside—an old man not yet old in years—"are you asleep?"

The Dominie turned his head towards her slowly. His eyes were wet, but he did not answer.

"What is the matter, father?" she cried, kneeling by the bedside. "Tell your Dora what it is!"

It was not the maudlin repentance of the "day after," but rather the deeper remorse of the morally weak, which made the schoolmaster reply: "I have been but an ill father to you, my bairn. Pray God that ye may ere long find a home of your own, where my sins will be powerless to follow you!"

The girl took Donald Gracie about the neck.

"You must not—indeed you must not," she said; "it is wicked of you to speak like that. I will never leave you, father. I want no home but where you are."

The Dominie waved his hand towards the window.

"Sit ye there, Dora," he said gently; "let the light fall on your face. I would speak with you. I am weak—very weak and ill. But in my weakness I have been made to see many things that formerly were hid from me."

The Dominie sat up in bed and looked long at his daughter with an eager inquiring gaze.

"Aye," he said at last, "surely you are of my father's folk—even as I, to my sorrow, took after my mother's kind. No, keep still a little longer. You have the brow low and broad, the determined mouth, the head thrown back, which all the—all my father's kin possess."

"And my own mother?" inquired his daughter; "you never speak to me of her."

"She is as the angels in heaven," said Donald Gracie. "Praise God that she was taken away from the things that have come to pass."

"Am I like her?" said Adora, with a hopeful accent.

"Whiles — while," said the Dominie softly. "When ye are sleeping, or when ye sit on the stoup and hearken to the mavises, it comes to me that ye hae a gliff of her. But it passes. It passes. No, I cannot say you are like your mother. Ye are a Balgracie from snood to shoe-sole, if ever there was one!"

"*A what, father?*"

The accent of astonishment in the girl's voice recalled the Dominie to himself.

"A Gracie—I said Gracie!" he answered quickly.

"But you said Bal-gracie, father?"

"Did I? I was not thinking," said her father wearily. "The name is used both ways where I come from!"

"Where was it that you married my mother?" the girl went on, resolved once for all to be at the heart of the secret.

"In the north—far to the northward," he answered her; "and when she was lost to me, I came hither, to leave the past behind me."

Adora thought it over and then said: "Was it after my mother that I was called Adora? There is no such name hereaway."

"No," answered the Dominie, "not after your mother, but after a great-aunt—the sister of my father. It is an old family name."

"And are your people all dead?"

The Dominie lifted his hand like one who is about to beat time to a slow tune.

"Dead—dead—all dead," he murmured. And then lower he added: "Dead to me!"

* Preen = pin.

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But the girl took only the letter of his words. She left the window and, coming near, seated herself beside him on the little stool.

"Dear," she said, patting him on the thin hair above his temples, "what does it matter? You have me to look after you. Why, I kept the school to-day! Would you like to hear how?"

And without giving him time to deny her, she began to tell him the wonderful history of the day of the ploughing match, from which all after events in the history of Lowran School were dated.

The Dominie listened, then presently he smiled. After a while he laughed outright.

"What was the 'maxie' Roy McCulloch made?" he asked.

The girl told him.

"Um!" growled the Dominie. "He's no great scholar to make a speaking about, but he kens better than that."

As the tale went on, the schoolmaster steadily regarded his daughter. New ideas were rising in his heart. He had thought her but a child, and lo! he realised that in a little others would be looking under the brim of her sun-bonnet.

"How old are you, Dora?" he asked presently, interrupting the tale of the repentance of Roy McCulloch.

"Nearly sixteen," she answered, with the cheerful previousness of youth as it looks forward across the years.

"Ah!" sighed the Dominie, "it will come all too soon!"

"What will come, father?" said the girl. "What has come over you?"

"My death-warrant!"

The girl rose hastily.

"Are you ill, father?" she said hurriedly. "Have you had the pain again?"

Donald Gracie took his daughter by the hand and made her sit down again.

"No," he said softly. "I would not be selfish; but the day you leave me—that day shall be as a death-warrant to me!"

"But I will never leave you, father!" said Adora Gracie anxiously. "All I want is just to bide and make you happy."

Then she tried cajolery.

"What a 'grumpus' of a Pater Æneas it is!" she cried, slapping his palm with her finger-tips; "always making troubles for itself! Stay! I will bring it a dish of tea and some of the scones it likes. Then we will see if it can still be ungrateful and grumpus to its only daughter."

As she scudded out of the room, the Dominie lay watching her. The ache of a wasted life—the unavailing sorrow of a past not to be recalled—were eating into his soul. Yet even in the throes of remorse he looked several times at a chest of drawers which filled up the space between the window and the door. Once he half rose from his bed, and immediately fell back again, with a bitter expression of anger and disgust upon his face.

"No, no," he said to himself; "surely I cannot be such a hound! Better far that I should take a pistol and shoot myself! There is no strength or manhood in me! If I cannot keep the door of my heart, why should I live to bring disgrace on her?"

Presently, like a sunbeam, Adora Gracie came dancing in, tea-cup in hand.

"Here it is," she cried, "just as you love it! This will teach you to be thankful that you have a wise woman to look after you. Drink it hot, grumpus, and watch me dust."

So saying, she began to go over the whole room systematically, the backs and bottoms of chairs included. Then came tops of pictures, the little ledges of drawer mouldings, then crevices and corners which no human eye could reach—for she was one who dusts for conscience' sake, not to have praise of women. While at her work, the tongue of Adora Gracie ran all the time on this topic and on that. She told again, with fresh details, the story of the ploughing match, speaking of the victory of Strong Mac with something like prideful exultation, then humorously of his repentance, and especially concerning the unexampled duet of vengeance played by him and Jock Fairies, till Donald Gracie shook with laughter in his bed.

Thus his daughter wiled him out of himself with the witchery of her tongue and the imitations with which she interspersed her narrative. Finally she went into the dark schoolhouse and brought out Roy's new stock of ash-plants, of which two already showed signs of wear and tear. The old man laughed aloud.

"Ye are a witch, Dora!" he said, shaking his head. "Yet I fear me these lightsome ways of yours will cause heart-ache to many."

The girl held up her hands in real dismay.

"'Deed, then, faither," she said, dropping into the vernacular, "but ye are dreadsome hard to please. Hand-ache and back-ache have I caused in plenty this day, but heart-ache is not on my conscience!"

The Dominie shook his finger at her with an air that said: "Bide a wee!"

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"And now," she cried, "I will leave you. You are to go straight to sleep, and you will be all well in the morning—the doctor said so. I will come in again to bid my old grumpus good-night!"

She ran out again, and the dusk settled down upon the chamber of Donald Gracie. The solitary candle made a point of illumination so bright that all the rest of the room was sunk in blackness of darkness.

The Dominie moved uneasily. He seemed to be repeating something to himself, which might have been a prayer, or some resolve put into words to give it greater binding force upon the man's will.

It was a much more sedate maiden who returned in her night garments to say a last good-night, a shawl round her shoulders which the Dominie recognised as having been about her mother's when she died. To the child's simplicity it was but a wrap in which to slip upon occasion into her father's room. To Donald Gracie it became a symbol of the black robe with which Fate had enwrapped and destroyed his life.

Without any prelude, according to her invariable custom since she was a child, Adora Gracie knelt at her father's side to say her prayers. Often in years past she had said them at the knee of a man rocking helplessly in his chair or dropping maudlin tears upon her hair. But the Angel of the Presence, that One who doth always behold the face of God, had been quick to draw a veil of merciful darkness between, so that the innocent had not been offended.

To-night, Donald Gracie, the unfrocked clergyman, the secret drunkard, laid his hand on his daughter's head as she prayed. He fixed his eyes on the window through which the night looked in on the white-robed figure kneeling by the bedside, and on the grey old man lying open-eyed, rigid, with doom written on his countenance.

Then Adora rose up, kissed her father on the forehead, said: "Good-night, grumpus; call me if you need me!" and so went her way to her narrow cot in the closet overlooking the garden.

In five minutes she was sleeping the sleep of the tired and the conscience free, but Donald Gracie lay long listening to the *drip-drip* of the tall pines on the leaden roof of the porch, as the moisture collected on the needles and fell slowly—*plop-plop*, regular and heavy as the ticking of a minster clock.

A bird came and nestled against the sill. The ivy on the wall tapped the pane. Over the fields the Gatehouse dog explained to all the hills that he was alone and very sorrowful. There was not yet a moon to bay at, so he bayed because of that.

Plop-plop! It was dreary, indeed, thought the Dominie. Besides, it was chill outside. On such a night one might easily take one's death from cold. And if so, what would come of that girl? Moreover, his head ached and he could not go to sleep. Yet sleep he must. What to do? Yes, there was one thing. There in the bottom drawer, at the near corner. He knew he could find it in the dark without troubling anyone.

Donald Gracie was half out of bed, when through his soul darted the rending illumination of sudden self-knowledge. It was a voice from heaven, like the flashing of the lightning of the Lord's anger from the east to the west.

"Oh, thou lost to shame, complete in sin!" it seemed to say—"what! So soon after the oath sworn, with the sound of the child's prayer yet upon thine ear! And yet thou wouldst bind thyself more hopelessly in the bondage! Donald Balgracie, once more beware, lest God forget to be gracious any more!"

And with a shuddering sigh, the Dominie sank back on his bed and lay still.

* * * * *

Long he abode motionless. Whether or not he prayed, no human being save himself can know. If he did, the devil had his hook in every petition. They could not rise upon the wings of insincerity. The heart denied what the lips craved.

There was silence in the darkened chamber. The bed creaked. There was silence again. Then a bird of the night flew heavily against the window, and a man, at business with a drawer in the corner, uttered a sharp startled cry.

A white figure, tall and slim, stood in the open door, holding aloft a lighted candle. Beneath knelt the man who had prayed; in his hand the Enemy of his Soul.

"Oh, father!" cried the girl; "and you promised!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SOUR MANNA OF VENGEANCE.

THERE is no hero worship like that of a small boy for a great. It passes the love of woman in this, that there is no expectation of return in it. Toleration is all that is expected. Personal chastisement only increases the fervour of the worshipper.

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"'Oh! they hae gotten him!' she cried."

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Neglect, ill words, blows are only so many love tokens, fuel to feed the flames of a more utter adoration.

In the Lowran School there were at least twenty boys who were willing to be slaves and foot-runners to Strong Mac. But only one of these had the necessary freedom of action to enable him to follow the god of his idolatry from point to point, ready to appear or to vanish, to fetch or to carry, to speak or to be silent, according to the will of the master.

This boy was Daid the Deil, son of Crob McRobb, the good-for-nothing scapegrace and poacher in ordinary to the village of Lowran.

Daid had remarkable advantages. He was not required to be present at certain hours for meals. Indeed, that would have been often a work of supererogation, for in Crob McRobb's house the meals had a way of not being present, either.

Daid therefore dined, as he lived, lightly and at large. A puddock-stool (so that it did not grow in a wood or on an internally rotten tree) would serve to fill a vacancy. Daid had a rule with regard to all mushrooms and toadstools which he communicated to his companions as follows—

"Lathies, it's like this, I comes to a muckle yin. I looks him ower. Gin he's spotty abune or greeny aneath, I hae nae mair trokin' wi' him. But if he's an ordinary, sappy, hairmless-lookin' animal, I juist eats a lump o' him, an' lets a wee bit gang doon my throat. Then 'gin it begins to burn as if I had swallied a red pepper, faith! I mak' straight for the nearest burn, and there I drink as muckle water as I can haud. There's maybe learnit folk that kens a better way wi' mushrooms, but that's guid eneuch for Daid! Ye needna often gang hungry if ye ken that!"

But this day of the Lowran ploughing match, Daid McRobb had known that, sooner or later, he would fare more royally than upon puddock-stools. He would go up to the Holm, and Jock Fairies would give him broken meats. Or if Jock would not—if, as Daid the Deil expressed it, "Jock took the sturdy"—he, Daid the Deil, would provide the broken meats for himself. If they were still whole meats, he would break them. The boy had all the keen shiftfulness of a village outcast, of the son of a petty poacher, an annexer of other people's property in a small way, a crafty encroacher upon other people's poultry-yards—all these was Daid, always in a small way.

Daid had been most things in his time, but, bar the poaching, which he pursued in the spirit of an academical exercise, he had decided long ago that (comparative) honesty was considerably the best policy. Blackmail was his particular line. He could not influence the conduct of his father, but he could find out where he had been. Sometimes Daid would even assort the plunder of the day as his father lay asleep (overcome with the fatigues of an arduous profession, together with too much "Lucky Greentrees"), and restore the property of protected persons to them—whether plough-culters, articles of harness, corn-measures, sieves, or game chickens and "kain hens" kept in mew for the next instalment of the Laird's dues.

Daid's blackmailing terms were not out of the way. He was no Rob Roy from yont the Lennox line. A bite and a sup at your back door, a warm corner by the kitchen fire, an occasional bed in the barn among the sacks when his father had barred him out of the tumble-down outhouse he called home—these made the modest sum of Daid's requirements. And withal he was acquiring the rudiments of a character. He did not now find himself chased out of a farmyard upon sight, as had been the way when he was no better than "that loon o' Crob McRobb's." He became "that limb, wee Daid"—which is a very different thing, the diminutive being as good as a bowl of porridge to him in most places.

On this day of the ploughing match, Daid had hovered in the offing of his divinity's favour all day, watching him, thinking how great, how noble, how incomparable was Strong Mac. His eyes were full of adoration. His very soul was longing to be taken notice of, even if only to the extent of having the attached body apostrophised and kicked out of the way. It chanced, however, that Strong Mac had, vulgarly speaking, other fish to fry. It was, for instance, nearly three of the clock on this November day before Strong Mac made his peace with Adora Gracie, and with many promises to be "on hand" in the morning, swung the full satchel across his back and took his road up the glen towards the House of Muir, where he lived with his father and his brother James. He was alone, as he expected to be—Jamie McCulloch having gone "wi' the lasses" as was his custom. To be particular, the elder brother had accompanied Miss Charlie Webster home—for the classical purpose of carrying her bag of books.

It was ten miles to the House of Muir by

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such road as there was, a road that a deer-stalking pony would have shied at. But Strong Mac did not propose to trouble the road. He knew better than that. By taking the face of the fell, striking into Pluckamin Cleuch, and following the left bank of the burn, he would come to a certain inconspicuous outcrop of rock, and under that rock, wrapped in an old blanket and touched with grease against the damp, he would find a gun. It had been hidden by himself in the morning; and even if there were nothing to waste powder on in the dusk, he had a hare or two snugly hidden away, the which he had shot in the morning.

The pheasant he had brought to school with intent to give it to Adora Gracie, but the events of the day had tried that young lady's temper. So when it was offered after the escapade of the ploughing match, she had replied: "Keep your poached pheasants for them that want them! I dinna!"

"It will make something nice for the—for Mr. Gracie!" Strong Mac suggested humbly.

But with the best of women, as Roy had yet to learn, repentance and punishment do not clear old scores as they do with a man. These remain, to be brought forward again upon occasion, as in French criminal practice, "by way of prejudice." So again Adora refused.

"I am obleeged to you, Roy McCulloch," she said, "but my father does very well with what I have provided for him—and I have the writing copies to set!"

And this, being of a nature of a hint tangible, caused Strong Mac to set his bonnet on his head and stride away, with a muttered "Good-e'en to ye, then!"

Now, if Adora had known to what dangers she was exposing her brave and unselfish ally, she would not, even for the sake of discipline, have made her declinature so instant and positive. But this, of course, was out of her power.

There was, however, one who did know. And she—was also of the sex which will "cast up" to itself rather than not at all.

The vengeance of Charlotte Webster had soured upon her early. Well may the Scriptures declare: "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." For to most of the breed of men revenge is, like the Israelites' desert manna, meat that will not keep. To the more northerly nations, at least, a blow stricken on the spot is more natural than the slow going down of sun after sun upon the wrath of man.

Charlotte Webster had spoken to her cousin, the head game-watcher, solely from the pique of a moment of bitterness. When she came back to school in the afternoon, she had fully intended to tell Roy what she had done, both as to his powder-flask and also how "it had slipped out" about the pheasant. But Strong Mac's absence, and then the exciting scene of the mutual punishment, unsettled her ideas again. She swerved from her purpose.

"He does a' that for her," she repeated over and over to herself, "and yet he wad shake my hand aff his arm, as if it were an adder or a puddock! I'll let him see!"

This mood held till letting-out time, when, as Roy had called out kindly: "Guid nicht t'ye, Chairlie!" she was again shaken by doubts, and decided to wait for him at the gate. But Roy, being (as we know) busy fleeching with Adora to accept his pheasant, did not come out so sharply as usual—and his brother James did.

James was a year older than Roy and of a different nature. Less strong physically than Roy, he had more quiet cunning—"a good lad," his father called him, "but speeritless, and a naitural wheedler after weemen!"

The judgment was severe, coming from the old cottier of the House of Muir, but this night the trend of affairs seemed to point to the father's discernment of his elder son's character.

"Come on, Chairlie," said James McCulloch; "what are ye waitin' for—to see Roy? He'll no be oot this while, I'll warrant. He'll be flairdyin' up the Dominie's lassie. It's weel he's satisfiet. I wadna be. Come on, Chairlie, unless ye want to spoil sport! And I ken a better than her—a bonny lass like you, the bonniest i' the pairish! Or if ye do want to speak to Roy, tell me, an' I'll cairry your message—unless it be that——"

Here he whispered in her ear.

"It's a lee—I dinna!" cried the girl, flushing; "neither him nor you, Jamie McCulloch, nor ony McCulloch that ever trod grass aneath their great nowts' feet."

"Aweel!" said Jamie philosophically, "sae muckle the better. For oor Roy's bespoken, and forbye he cares mair for a sawmon i' the weil, or a troot oot o' the burn, than for a' the lasses in ten pairishes!"

"To say naething o' the Laird o' Lowran's pheasants!" interjected Charlotte, with a curl of the lip.

Now, Jamie McCulloch had grave faults, but lack of fidelity to his family and its traditions was not one of them. He kept

his "flairdyin'" (as his father called his love-making) and his business relations in separate and water-tight compartments.

"What ken ye aboot the Laird's pheasants?" he said quickly, the slight change in his voice apparent to the ear feminine of Charlotte Webster.

"Me?" she answered at once. "I ken naething. I was juist thinkin' what a bonny bird a pheasant was. My faither minds when there was naething in the countryside but the grouse an' the paitricks an' the muirhens an' the——"

"But tell me, Chairlie," interrupted James, "what ken ye aboot oor Roy an' the pheasants?"

"I heard," said Charlotte softly, choosing her words, "that whiles—that it is weel kenned—I mean——"

"What is it?" demanded Roy's brother with some of the family asperity; "what are ye keepin' back?"

Charlotte Webster, who found herself bogged among things which she dared not confess, had recourse to weapons general.

"I'll greet in a meenite," she said, with eyes already showery, "'gin ye speak to me like that, Jamie McCulloch. Now, then!"

"I'm no speakin' to ye like onything, Chairlie," said Jamie, recalling himself to his own proper methods and slipping an arm round the girl's plump shoulder. "I am far ower fond o' ye. But tell me what ye ken—a' ye ken!"

Now, the first of these things Charlotte would attempt—being a woman, the other was altogether beyond her.

"Weel, ye see, Jamie," she said, reassured by her position, "the way o't is this. My cousin Jonathan is the head keeper at Lowran, an' he whiles comes to oor hoose to see—my mither."

"And you, Charlotte, ye besom?" inquired James, with tender chiding.

"Oh, juist daffin'!" said Charlotte, with conscientious carelessness.

"I ken cousins' daffin'!" said Jamie cunningly; "but drive on!"

By this time they were well down the road which passes the entrance of Pluckamin Cleuch. There was a double turn in the highway well known to Miss Webster and her various escorts, just beyond this place. Once round it, you could see Miss Webster's family mansion, and as a consequence—for Mistress Webster, that efficient mother in Israel, needed no spectacles—you also were in danger of observation. All things have a purpose. The purpose of the S-shape on the road will now be apparent to the meanest intelligence.

Charlotte always held out her hand for her bag at this place.

"I'll no trouble ye to come ony farther," was her formula; "ye maun be tired cairryin' a' thae books!"

It was as she was saying this that a gunshot went off up in the wood. Charlotte dropped the bag and caught at her own breast with one hand.

"Oh! they hae gotten him!" she cried. "They hae shot Roy—an' it's my faut!"

"Hoot-toot!" said Jamie, "it will be a keeper lettin' drive at a rabbit, mair like! But if it's Roy, he is brave an' weel able to look after himsel'! Forbye he may hae pickit up a hare. I ken he took his gun ower the hill wi' him this mornin'."

But Charlotte had some reasons for thinking otherwise.

"Oh, no! he's deid, and it's me that killed him!" she cried passionately. "I poured water intil his pooder-flask, and—oh!—oh!—oh!"

The confession ended in a sobbing remorse, equally sincere and inarticulate.

"Faith, it's true!" said Jamie McCulloch. "That canna be Roy's shootin', for he wad never bring the gun sae far doon the muir."

And so, without even waiting to say goodbye, he left Charlotte standing forlornly in the loop of the road, her schoolbag abandoned among the muddy leaves in front of her, and her eyes strained upon the dark woods of the Cleuch of Pluckamin, which, in the purple gloaming, kept their secret impenetrable.

(*To be continued.*)

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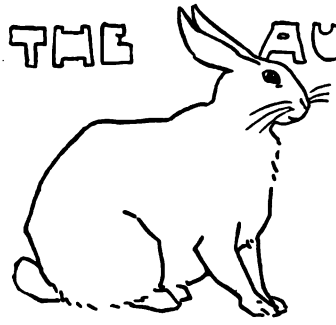

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A WILD RABBIT

AS NARRATED TO S.L.BENSUSAN

BETWEEN the fox cover and the heron grove there is a meadow full of choice grasses and flowers. Tall trees shade it on the side of the wood, and on the side of the cover there is a tiny stream that never becomes quite dry in the hottest weather. The water keeps grass and flowers fresh when other fields are parched, and half the birds of the countryside come there to drink at sunrise and sunset. Strolling across the meadow at the time of the twilight the other evening—it was the fifteenth of May, and the grass was as soft as velvet—I heard a sudden cry of alarm, and recognised the voice of a rabbit in distress. I made quick way to the corner whence the voice proceeded, and was just in time to keep an aged buck rabbit from strangling himself in a snare. With the wire-nippers that are part of my knife, I snipped the noose and set the captive free. He was too overcome to speak, so I waited for him to recover his breath.

"Another half-minute," he said gravely, "and I should have gone to pot."

"It is as well that you did not," I replied, combining politeness with truth, for he was obviously long past the age at which he might have served the table.

"What is that snare doing here?" he said in rather a choking voice. "Have you no respect for the time of year? Does not this season of gladness move you to something like pity? or, if it does not, don't you know that we are not fit to eat just now?"

"Word of honour," I answered, "it is no work of mine. Look at that snare." I pulled it out of the ground and held it in front of him. "You can see that has been used dozens of times—it must be a poacher's. I don't set snares, as you should know by now, if you live round here."

"Well," said the old rabbit—rather sulkily, I thought—"of course, I'll take your word for it. I did see a short man with a moleskin cap and waistcoat strolling round the edge of the gorse the other night, an hour after your 'looker' had been out. I didn't like the appearance of him at all. He seemed to know too much about the wind and the runs and the earths that are fresh. A dangerous person to have about a respectable place."

"But tell me," I said, "what are you doing here? I did not think there was a rabbit of your age on the land. You ought to have gone to the bag two years ago."

"If you had your way," snapped the rabbit, "every piece of fur and feather about the place would have to be content with two years of life or less; but luckily some of us can take some care of ourselves, and I'm not the only veteran in this district. I've been about these fields longer, and had more adventures in them, than I care to remember."

"Let us make a compact," I suggested. "You tell me just what you remember of your life from the day you had your first look round to the present moment, and in return for that information I will help you, as far as I can, to help yourself. I and my friends will leave you alone, though of course I can't be answerable for poachers and vermin, or accidents that will happen."

"A very generous suggestion," said the rabbit, with some approach to a sneer, "but I don't mind confessing to you that your consideration is quite misplaced. I don't fear you and your friends a little bit; the only people who trouble me are poachers. Why, for the life of you, you could not have set a snare like the one you cut me out of. If you could, I expect you would. I'll tell you what I know, because you have helped me out of a tight place; but I don't want any promise from you. I can look after myself, so far as you are concerned."

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"A short man with a moleskin cap."

"Well, well," I replied, "I will take you at your word. I am all attention." So saying, I sat down on a log, and the buck rabbit sat up and stroked his whiskers.

"I was born long before the grass and leaves you see round you were even thought of," began the rabbit. "Sometimes I think I must be the oldest creature in the world—perhaps out of it—for although the sun and moon and stars were above the earth when I came to it, I have seen stars disappear, and the moon is always changing. I have seen no fewer than four summers." He waited, as though to impress me with the full importance of such longevity, and continued—

"Four summers ago I entered into possession of these fields. My first feelings of consciousness told me I was in a warm nest down in the darkness underground, tended by a kind mother, whose care and love embraced half-a-dozen or more sisters and brothers born into the world on the same day as I. Sometimes I would hear the pattering of feet outside, sometimes mother would leave us awhile and we would be frightened. Once she came back at the top of her speed and lay trembling and panting with fear above us, and presently we heard the hideous noise of a gun. We didn't understand then how we were destined to fight for our lives from the first day our eyes were opened."

"You have not done so badly," I suggested.

"As far as you know; but I have survived eighty children, and more grand and great grandchildren than you could count on the longest day in the year if you started when I rise and stayed until the sunset. How many of these have been brought to an untimely end by you and your friends? However, if they had all lived, there would not have been enough food to go round—that is my only consolation. Let me get back to my tale.

"When our eyes were opened and we could see our mother for the first time, she gave us a little advice. It was very simple and brief. 'I'm going to take you outside to-morrow, my dears,' she said; 'and when we are in the grass, you must watch my tail. It is beautifully white, so that you can't miss it. Follow me carefully and attend to all I do or say. If you miss me, you will be eaten up before you know where you are.'

"Early on the following morning we went to the edge of the bank where mother had built her nest. The sun had just risen, and was looking rather sleepy as he smiled to us over the edge of the hill. Birds were beginning their earliest song, bees and butterflies were abroad, and our mother introduced us to all of them. Then we fed on the tender grasses and wild parsley that grew round the mouth of the hole leading to our nest; and when our mother moved carefully and slowly forward, we could see her white tail, and our way was made sure. When we had fed and played, we returned to the nest. We grew very quickly; weather was warm and food was plentiful, and I am sorry to say that one or two of my brothers and sisters were disobedient. They were wicked enough to suggest that mother kept us under strict control because she wanted to keep all the best food for herself. Foolish rabbits, you were to pay dearly for your lack of respect!" The buck rabbit passed the back of a fore-paw across his eyes and continued—

"Early morning and late afternoon saw the fields alive with us, and our parents told us that so soon as we were old enough we should go to the warren. That was on the hillside, and held the fairest does and bravest bucks in rabbitdom. We could not be born in the warren, or go to it before we could take care of ourselves, mother told us; there was no room for baby rabbits, and

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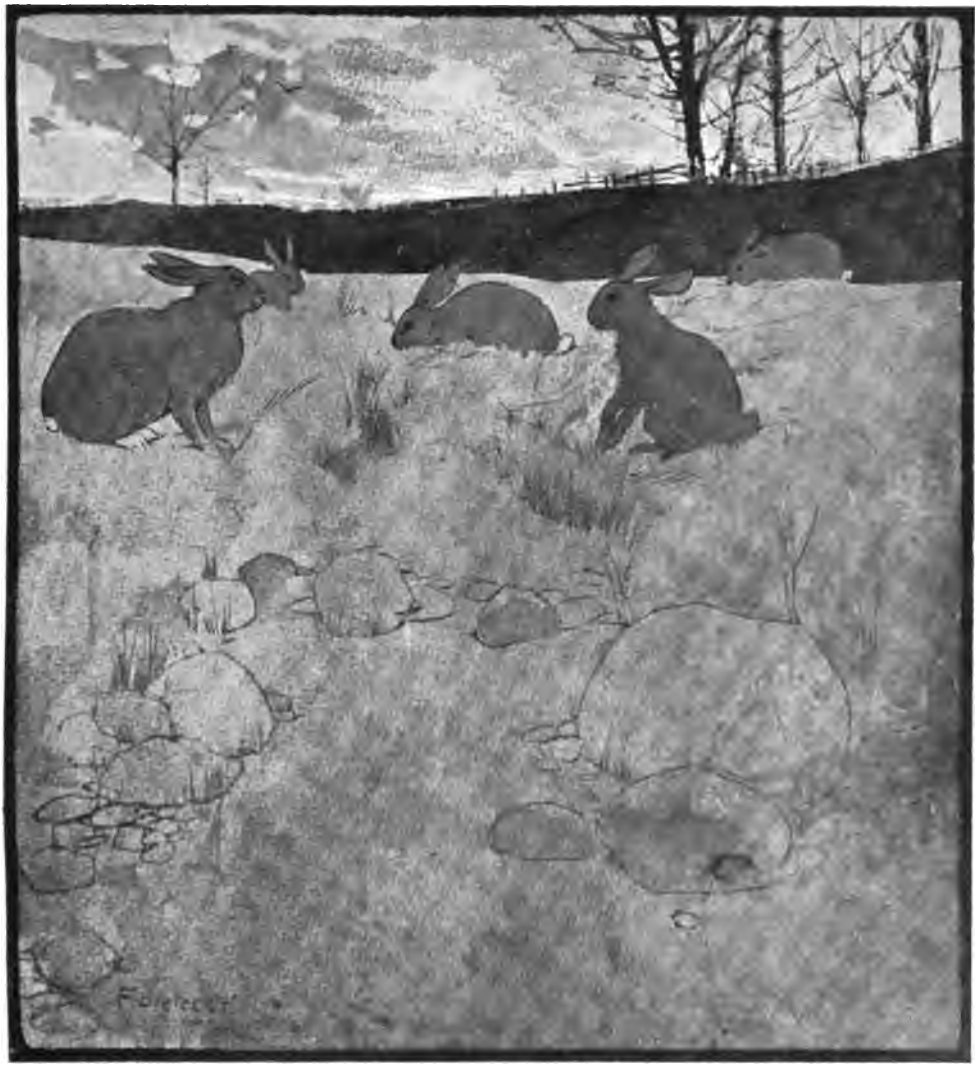

"We went to the edge of the bank."

when the elders came in hurriedly, the little ones would be trampled to death. That is why my parent had made her 'stop' outside the warren, lining it with warm fur stripped from her own breast.

"You will be astonished to hear that I was the only survivor of my parent's children by the time I was six weeks old," said the buck rabbit reflectively. "Some of the others were careless, some unfortunate. We could not have had a more careful mother. When we were out with her and she scented danger of any sort, she would strike the ground with her hind-feet and make for home as fast as she could. I paid more heed to her than to the food, and that is why I am here now.

"It was a proud day for me when I was admitted to the warren on the hillside. The warren is a wonderful place. A rabbit who did not know his way about it might wander for hours along its corridors and never see daylight. Our first business was to learn the direction of all the runs, so that we could dodge ferrets, polecats, weasels, stoats, and the rest of our ground enemies. A rabbit has no proper security of life and limb, but he finds his nearest approach to safety in a warren. Brutes like yourself and your dogs can't follow him there; hawks, kites, crows, and other birds of prey are helpless; and if weasels and ferrets and their cousins can do us a great deal of harm, it is

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"She outpaced the lurcher dog."

certain that they would do a great deal more but for the warren.

"Ah!" he added, after a moment's pause devoted to smoothing his whiskers, "persecuted, even murdered though we may be, we are your masters. In my long life I have seen the warren grow in size and population; I have seen hedges honeycombed with fresh earths; I have seen my grandchildren and their grandchildren scrape their way under the farmer's wire netting to eat their fill of the farmer's young corn. As a veteran and a student of life, I know that in time all these fields will be one big warren, and then I expect we shall be able to defy all of you.

"Well, let me get back to my story, and do not interrupt. In the warren I found my father, and he advised me to take a wife so soon as the summer was ended. 'You will have a deal to put up with,' he said, 'and a wife is a great comfort.' He was not greatly upset by the loss of my brothers and sisters, for he told me that he and my mother were parents of nearly fifty living rabbits, and he said that that family was big enough for a modest couple. So with good advice, good food, and good lodging, the summer passed merrily enough. The corn high out of our reach had turned from green to gold; the hay was cut; it was clear to the veterans—that is to say, to the rabbits more than a year old—that autumn was not far away.

"Early in the morning, after we had fed on the wet grasses, we would go into the cornfields and stay there. There was plenty of fresh greenstuff to be had, tender, juicy grasses that were within the reach of our teeth, and we would have fine fun chasing one another down the furrows. We heard our elders speaking of evil times in store. One evening I heard the father partridge talking to his wife and family in similar strain as they 'jugged' for the night; but I was young. I stayed on amid the corn, and one morning, having overslept myself, I was just starting for my usual haunts, when I saw men and horses, and a great, curious beast tied behind the horses, by the field's edge. I crouched low and watched. The men did something to the beast, and fastened it behind the horses, and away it went crying, 'Click, click, click, click!' down the field. As it went along behind the horses, it cut the wheat close to the roots, bound it in sheaves, tied the sheaves, and dropped them without stopping—a terrible performance! It was not a big meadow, and in a few hours only two lengths of corn were left standing. Then a number of lads came into the field with sticks and dogs. I ran back to the edge of my earth, but my curiosity overcame my alarm. I knew that well-nigh a score of my friends would be in the last swathe, and I trembled for them. Away went the monster behind the horses, 'Click, click, click, click!' he screamed, as he cut the ripe corn and tied it up. Then the nerves of the hidden rabbits could stand no more shock. Away they raced helter-skelter for home, followed by the boys and dogs—a shocking sight. Ten reached home, eight perished. There was a hare in the corn, too, but she was fortunate, and outpaced the lurcher dog that went after her. It was a day of regrets in our field. My eyes were opened; I knew the full extent of man's brutality—or thought I did, which is not quite the same thing. We heard that all over the countryside the harvest was disfigured by excesses of that description, that rabbits were slaughtered irrespective of age or sex, that the harvesters joked about their murderous deeds, and ate the corpses of their victims for their Sunday's dinner.

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Could human brutality go further than that, I ask you?

"From the day I have just described," said the buck rabbit solemnly, "my life has been devoted to escaping from the most extraordinary perils. All seasons of the year, and all hours of the day, have been full of danger. If I am alive to instruct you now, I have my own skill to thank for it, and perhaps a little luck as well. On the morning of the first of September I lay in the meadow behind the turnip-field. As usual, I was head to wind, and I am free to confess that I was not thinking of danger, when on a sudden I saw a party of men with guns coming towards me. I looked up and caught the eye of the foremost man. His gun went to his shoulder. I jumped forward and ran. As I did so, I heard a voice cry: 'Don't shoot, you'll scare the birds.' I know now that I owe my life to that sudden interruption, though perhaps it hastened the end of a partridge or two. After that morning I did not sun myself in the grass any more. We rabbits are quick to avoid the dangers we understand; our difficulty lies in our ignorance of danger and the fact that we so seldom get a chance of repairing a mistake.

"It would take too long to tell you all I went through in the early part of that autumn; it will be enough to let you hear of a few of my escapes, that you may acknowledge my prudence, foresight, sagacity, and resource. My next horrible experience came early in November. One evening, while most of us were out of the warren feeding, a small army of muzzled ferrets went through a great part of the warren. Weather was fine for the time of year, and scores of my friends decided to lie outside the warren in the dry, fern-covered copses rather than go back to their tainted homes. We cannot endure the smell of ferrets. Happily, I was in a remote, little known corner of the warren that escaped the ferrets' visit, so I stayed where I was and did not go into covert. On the next morning but one, six men with guns, assisted by several beaters, went right through the cover sheltering the rabbits that had left warren. The slaughter was prodigious. More than three hundred friends and acquaintances of mine were missing. But for my sagacity I might have been among them.

"I will pass over the rest of that terrible winter," said the buck rabbit. "Once a monster with a gun—it may have been you—trod within two inches of my head as I lay flat on the grass. Another time, when driven into the open by a ferret, somebody fired twice at me, the first lot of pellets going so close past me that my ears were perforated; the second shot went just where I should have been had I not turned very sharply into a convenient hole. Ah!

"I heard a voice cry: 'Don't shoot.'"

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I'm a smart rabbit. When the dreary cold days came to an end, and the few remaining rabbits were as nervous as blackbirds, I at least knew most of the disgraceful tricks by which you seek to ensnare us.

"Strangely enough," continued the buck rabbit reflectively, "all our fears went with the fine weather. So soon as the first breath of spring came across the fields, our old careless courage came back, we played about as though there were no such things as guns. My wife and I would run over the fields just as if you men had never had a Ground Game Act. Soon my wife selected a 'stop,' lined the bottom of it with fur from her own breast, and I became a father of eight. Half of them arrived at maturity; I believe one or two became parents of fine families in time. I lost count, because my wife presented me with so many more children during the year that the novelty wore off. Her generosity brought about her death, for the badger broke right down on to the 'stop,' and ate her, together with her latest family. In consequence of this disaster I left the warren and travelled a mile or two further off, to a deep hedge with a wheat-field on one side and a clover-field on the other. There I lived a very sober life, feeding late and early, avoiding open places, and never forgetting that my enemies were on all sides of me.

"Two other men came through the darkness, winding up a very long piece of rope."

"That winter brought another thrilling experience in its train. One evening, just as I had returned from feeding—I never stayed gossiping as so many of the other rabbits did—I ran in just before two dingy-looking men began to put a long net down on stakes right in front of my hedge. The net was hung loosely on poles about two yards apart, and the men worked very quietly, paying no heed to the ditch. Like a flash the truth came to me. They were bent on securing the scores of rabbits still feeding in the field. But how were they going to do it? I waited trembling.

"When the net, securely staked, hung in loose folds right between my friends and home, the men stood quietly behind it, and one of them hooted just as the barn owl does when she starts her flight in the evening. Then I saw two tiny lights at the far end of the field; they showed for a couple of seconds and went out. A minute later I heard the footsteps of my friends as they raced headlong over the grass. I tried to call and warn them, but fright kept me silent, while one after another of my companions rushed into the treacherous net, that enveloped them in its folds and held them helpless. Presently the rush ceased, and two other men came through the darkness, winding up a very long piece of rope. They had started from

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the corners of the far side of the field, each holding one end of the rope. When my poor friends felt the strange thing coming up to them like a snake, they raced for home as fast as they could, never seeing the net, which had the same colour as the grass. So soon as the four murderous poachers were all together, they started along the netting, taking up the stakes and disentangling the rabbits from the meshes. Once the rabbit was free, they broke its neck. By the time the slaughter was over, they had secured three sackfuls of victims—as much as three men could carry; the fourth had the nets and stakes and rope. Then I heard them go off, one of the men saying he hoped you would have good sport next time you were shooting in that particular corner of the land. If I had known how to do so, I should have fainted from horror; as I did not, I went out for a quiet second meal to steady my nerves.

"At that time I was compelled to watch the foxes very carefully. You know, it is quite a mistake to believe that foxes are always unfriendly towards us. Many a springtime I have seen Mother Vixen's little ones playing with my latest family in most friendly fashion. Father Fox will only trouble rabbits when he can't get poultry, and we are so accustomed to persecution that we think nothing ill of him for that, preferring to accept his kindness when he is kind, and keeping out of his way when he is hungry. That winter the farmers were more miserly than usual, and the foxes ate several of their old friends. To be sure, they apologised for the necessity, but that consolation did not go far.

"The fat man who lives in a cottage by the wood."

"I should weary you," added the buck rabbit, after a brief pause to recover his wind, "if I told you of all my 'hair-breadth 'scapes' from the imminent deadly breech-loader, or how I have successfully defied ferrets, foxes, stoats, weasels, pole-cats, badgers, big hawks, dogs, boys, poachers, and things that call themselves sportsmen.

"There was plenty of fresh greenstuff to be had."

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One more experience and I must bring my story to a close.

"Last autumn I migrated for a time, and went to the park in search of fresh fields and pastures new. It is a lovely place, full of lordly pheasants, and it belongs, I think, to a fat man in velveteen who lives in a cottage by the wood and orders the gentleman who lives in the big house to do as he is told. Well, there is a meadow by the warren—a very big meadow, full of soft grass—and in the coldest weather rabbits find a lot of food there—fresh greenstuff for the most part. I went once. You had to go through some narrow holes in the fence that surrounded the entire field. I did not like it, and said so. 'Something will happen,' I said to the rabbits; and the elder ones, being devoted to fresh greenstuff, said they were fatalists, and that what was decreed was decreed, while the younger ones said I was a tiresome old person who ought to be suppressed.

"Well, one morning, when there must have been three or four hundred rabbits in that great pasture, there was a big cry of alarm. Every entrance had closed suddenly. Two hours later a party from the big house came into the field, and in two hours there was not a rabbit left alive. I heard them congratulating the fat man in velveteen, and saw some of them giving things to him, although I had heard him speaking very angrily while the murders were being committed. That night I left the park, never to return, and I spend my old age in the field where I was born. And here my lesson ends. I am old enough to believe that there are still a few things I have to learn; but if all rabbits had as much wisdom as I, you would have very poor sport. Now good-bye, and thanks for your assistance with the snare."

So saying, the aged rabbit went off very quietly to his favourite bank, and I saw him no more.

AN EPILOGUE.

IT is good, dear heart, to have seen the sun,
To have felt one's youth and the joys thereof;
To have dreamed fair dreams, when the day was done,
Of the world-old miracles, hope and love.

It is well to have known Pain's icy breath,
To have measured with Sorrow, face to face,
To have learned grim truths from the lips of Death,
To have heard Care follow, and won the race.

And now, at the last, when the sun rides west,
And time and the twilight let down the bars
That guard the crossing—ah, me! it is best
To pay toll of all to faith and the stars!

CHARLOTTE BECKER.

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" . . . . only Aunt Brooke—a perfect duck of a thing. Granny, she'll tell you ghost stories, but you *must* listen—and, of course, Dad, the Mater, and all the boys will be here. Later on, if possible, one of Teddy's 'Varsity chums may drop in. They tell me he is great fun. I'm longing to see him. And we all hope you will join us at dinner—half-past one sharp—and excuse short notice. The Mater asked me to write because she knows I hate writing, and, being Christmas Eve, she thought a little penance would be good for me.

" Yours very sincerely,
" ELIZABETH."

" P.S.—I insist on your coming."

" ' Yours very sincerely' "—Rackett lingered on the words as though they were old wine—" isn't it ripping ? Wish she'd underlined the ' very,' though. But ' I insist on your coming.' Much as to say ' Can't do without you.' By Jove ! I must give something away to-night. I never felt so utterly, absolutely, almost confoundedly happy in my life. She—she—'pon my soul, she's better than I thought she was, the darling ! "

Rackett bounced out of his armchair, holding the letter to his lips, and walked three times round his table. Hardly walked—danced, jigged, waltzed, gavotted, singly, in pairs, in a jumble. Then, pushing his fingers through his hair, he put the letter under the lamp, drew his chair up to the table, sat down, and started to read it all over again from the beginning. It took some time, as it was necessary to go back every now and then. In a lady's letter there is more between the lines than on them. When, however, he arrived at the last full stop, he stuck a thumb into each side of his waistcoat and stared into the depths of his lamp-shade.

" ' I insist,' underlined. Which makes it ' I in . . sist.' . . . I can see her eyebrows come up like two new moons as she said it, with a little tightening of her lips, which immediately afterwards honoured the quill by holding it between them, while she—with now a little tender flicker in her eye—such a

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grey eye—stuck down the envelope before writing 'Chichele Rackett, Esq., 102A, King's Bench Walk, Temple. Immediate.'" His voice sank into a whisper. "Elizabeth Rackett. Mrs. Chichele Rackett. Goodness! how well it sounds! If she says 'Yes' to-morrow—if she only does—I believe I shall be obliged to go mad and break things."

He bent over the letter as though it were a long, sweet, slender hand whose delicious nails each contained a rising sun, and kissed it. And then he told it how he would be so grateful because he loved her so; how, if she married him, he would be a clean, loving, honest chap—tender when she was irritable, true to himself for her sake, never argumentative . . . and all those other things we have all said, or have yet to say, on similar occasions.

Propping the precious letter up against the lamp, so that the full light might fall upon it—the little queer moisture in his eyes didn't seem to affect his sight—he loaded his pipe. That best of pipes. The last before the first.

Then, for the tenth time, louder, something more irritably, the knocking he hadn't heard was repeated on the door.

This time, being saner, he heard it, ran his fingers through his hair, hastily secured his letter—the only letter in the world—and finally, as the handle of an umbrella smote its panels, opened the door.

"My dear Mrs. Biggles, I'm so sorry. Come in. Hope you have not been knocking long?"

Mrs. Biggles lifted her thin chin so high that two long, hard cords started out and ran down into the frill round the neck of her dress. "Oh, no, sir," she said, with Bunyan-like meekness; "I only 'eard Big Ben strike two quarters, and it ain't freezin' so 'ard now, thank you kindly, sir."

To make amends, Rackett became more cordial than a log fire. "My dear Mrs. Biggles, you must be worn out. Do sit down and——"

"Thank you kindly, sir. I'd as lief stand, Mr. Rackett."

Thrown back upon himself by a frontispiece more coldly dignified—almost, indeed, more rudely polite—than the bluest of Blue Books, Rackett found himself wondering what "lief" was derived from, and why "rather" did not do as well.

"You will at least join me in a glass of whisky"—inspiration sat upon every feature "to wish me, while I wish you, a merry Christmas? This is excellent whisky, though there is not much left, Mrs. Biggles."

He seized the bottle breezily.

Mrs. Biggles' chin resumed its place. "Thank you, sir; it may starve off the chill."

He handed her a tumbler, hiding with infinite thoughtfulness the fact that he was well aware how large her share had been in reducing the whisky to its present level. Was she not the good lady who "did for him"? Is not the flesh always weak when there is spirit in the cupboard?

Holding her glass high, she stared into it solemnly—her wedding-ring, very worn in places, reminded Rackett of the steps to his chambers—wrestled with a sniff, and said: "There ain't no doubt but as 'ow your Christmas will be merry spent—most like—in the succle of peace and plenty, with sossages likewise, and snap-dragon to follow. But as ter mine——"

With a great gust of tears the poor soul put her untasted whisky on the table and covered her worn face with two thin, mottled hands.

Rackett blushed. What a blackguard he was, to be going to sit at a table groaning with Christmas cheer—Elizabeth's father was a solicitor with the largest *clientèle* in London—next to the dearest girl the world had ever held, with her hand, perhaps, in his under the table-cloth——

"My dear Mrs. Biggles," he said hurriedly, "do let me help you for once. I was only saying just now that I wanted to give something to somebody, and nothing——"

With a hysterical, shrill laugh the charwoman took her wet fingers from her smudged face, gathered up her apron, and threw it over her head. The Gloire de Dijon in her little black bonnet, feeling itself to be an imitation of the most three-farthing description, sighed with relief.

With presence of mind unique in so young a man, Rackett took the shaking lady by the elbows and ran her sympathetically into his armchair. She sat there in a heap, sniffing loudly, her week-old apron making a none too spotless tent over her attenuated figure.

"There, there, cheer up, Mrs. Biggles. No one must be unhappy on Christmas Eve. You were afraid you and your kiddies wouldn't manage a Christmas dinner, eh? That's the trouble, isn't it?"

Mrs. Biggles dropped her apron, smothered her sobs, and rose impressively. "I say to you, Mr. Rackett, that you are a round hole . . . You 'ave found your plice in life . . .

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Why, anyone 'ud think you'd been in the Divorce Court all your time. I do believe as 'ow you kin see through a brick wall."

Rackett blushed with pleasure. "Look here, Mrs. Biggles, how much does it require to buy all you want to fill—is it fourteen mouths now?"

"Thirteen and a 'arf, sir."

"Now, Mrs. Biggles, let's be business-like. Take this sheet of paper and this pencil"—

"Wiped her hand on her apron, and stretched it out to Rackett."

Mrs. Biggles treated it as though it were a sugar-stick—"and jot the items down. . . . Now, there are thirteen children and a baby, yourself and one husband, and perhaps an aunt or an uncle. That's sixteen and a half mouths. The turkey must, therefore, weigh at least thirty-two pounds."

Mrs. Biggles' eyes danced. "Oh! but what price the oven, sir?" she said.

"Never mind about the oven. Cook it in front of the fire. How much will it cost?"

Perplexity laid a heavy hand on Mrs. Biggles. "Well, sir, the nearest thing I've ever bought to a turkey was a pigeon, what was one and six. But look 'ere, Mr. Rackett, I tell you what. I'll go out as the shops are shuttin' and get a bargain. They chuck 'em away—if you'll excuse the expression—lite at night. Anyway, Mrs. Midwinter, a widder-lidy as lives next door to me, as chars, says to me last Christmas, she says——"

"Put down a sovereign, Mrs. Biggles," said Rackett, unconsciously catching the manner of a great one for whom he longed to devil. "Then there'll be—let me see. Will two dozen sausages do?"

"Sossages? Oh, crums!"

"Right. Twopence a piece, twice twenty-four, forty-eight—four shillings."

"What O!" cried Mrs. Biggles excitedly. "Knock off a couple of bob, sir, and that'll have a margin; because I does charing for a gent as makes 'em a specialarity, and he'll——"

"Then," said Rackett, who felt that the woolsack itself would have to be re-lined for him to sit upon, "there are the etceteras."

"Oh! Mr. Rackett, keep off the grass.

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We don't want nothink French. It'd be all over our street."

Rackett began to feel a much greater respect for Mrs. Biggles. He had an enormous dislike to artificiality. She was beginning to be delightfully natural. "Er —potatoes, two shillings. Those cabbages that try to imitate roses and don't succeed——"

"Spraughts?"

"Good. Another two shillings."

"Lor! What a beno!"

"And the pudding——"

"'Ere! are we to 'ave a puddin'?"

If the lion underneath Nelson's statue would only condescend to melt into laughter, its expression would exactly resemble that worn by Mrs. Biggles. Involuntarily her feet commenced to move as they had done many years ago to a piano-organ. A wave of gratitude and astonishment crept over her. Something upon which she instantly placed a thumb and finger fell from her eyes to the paper over which she had scrawled in a shaky, schoolgirl hand.

"I believe ten shillings would get you a regular thumping pudding, Mrs. Biggles," said Rackett, pretending not to notice Mrs. Biggles' condition. "And, now, is that everything?"

"Everythink, and a bit more, sir," she said, between smiles and tears.

"No; we are wrong. There's port wine yet."

"Porty wine, sir? Oh! I couldn't; I couldn't indeed."

"My dear Mrs. Biggles, what would any Christmas dinner be without port wine and—by Jove! good again — walnuts. There, there, old lady, don't cry. I'll just go and get the money from my room while you sip your whisky."

Gathering his dressing-gown more tightly round him—there are those who will be shocked to hear that he had been sitting all the evening in pyjamas for economy's sake; writing in trousers bags them so at the knee—Rackett darted into his bedroom, leaving Mrs. Biggles trembling with anticipation, excitement, and suppression. She longed to plunge into the bosom of her family with loaded arms.

Suddenly there came from the bedroom an exclamation of disgust and horror. With pale face, Rackett came into his sitting-room. "Mrs. Biggles," he said, "I'm the biggest idiot in the Temple. I've just discovered that the cheques and postal orders I expected from the papers I do work for have not arrived. I haven't a penny in the place."

Mrs. Biggles rose to her feet. She looked like an electric light suddenly switched off.

"But this is the best thing we can do. Would you very much mind making a bundle of some of those clothes you'll find scattered about my bedroom, and taking them to pawn? I'm so sorry to ask you to do such a thing, but I really haven't anything else upon which to raise money. My watch and rings went for the rent a few days ago."

"'We shall be most awfully late for dinner.'"

"Mind, sir? Not me!" cried Mrs. Biggles, switched on again to sixteen-candle power. "Uncle and me don't stand on no ceremony."

Rackett gave a sigh of relief. He would rather himself go without dinner than disappoint this worn mother of thirteen and a half.

"Well, then, Mrs. Biggles, there they are, hanging up and lying about. Pack them up and hurry away to do your shopping. Bring

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me the ticket next time you come. Hurry; it's already quite late."

She returned in no time with a huge bundle. This she put on the floor by the door, wiped her hand on her apron, and stretched it out to Rackett.

"A merry Christmas to yer, sir, and—and God bless yer for feeding the 'ungry——"

"So glad you came, Mrs. Biggles. Good night. Have a good time on Christmas day, and—and drink this toast to-morrow: 'Mr. Rackett's Queen Elizabeth.' Don't forget. Good night."

With a warm glow at his heart, Rackett, briefless barrister and struggling author, returned to his armchair, to his letter, to his hopes, doubts, and fears.

Under his pillow that night lay the letter, whose every word he knew by heart.

* * * * *

When Rackett woke about half-past eight on Christmas morning, the first thing he did was to scramble to the foot of the bed like a schoolboy to see what Santa Claus had left. Which conclusively proved what a ruling power habit is. He found nothing at the end of the bed. One sock was by the door, and the other in the fireplace with his collar. He stood in the middle of the room and chuckled. At any rate, it showed that if he had not yet made a name and reputation, he had plenty of time left in which to do so.

Before doing anything else he thought it better to make himself reacquainted with the contents of his letter. This he did, walking up and down the room, till his bare feet with one accord voted for shoes, and his body for a dressing-gown. It was Christmas Day, indeed. On his window were traced, with the delicate touch of a wood-engraver, exquisite fern leaves and banks of flowers upon which Titania might have lain. Putting a towel round his neck, he threw up the window. Everything was white. The walk below, the high railings, every single blade of grass in the gardens, every tree, every branch, every twig—a dainty, sparkling white. The barges on the river, the wharves, the high chimneys beyond, the air itself—whitest of white. Only the river, moving heavily and quietly down to the sea, was black.

Before he closed the window, Rackett fetched a handful of bread and, breaking it into tiny mouthfuls, scattered it in the walk and on the window-sill, whistling. With shrill thanks, down came a bevy of intimate sparrows, elbowing each other good-humouredly for the largest pieces, darting up with others too heavy to carry, dropping them for quick little rascals to seize upon.

Under the railings opposite, with a muzzle hanging under his chin, sat a casual dog, with expectation in its eyes. "Well, my friend," thought Rackett, "so you shall." He went to the cupboard in his sitting-room, took up a chop he had been unable to tackle the previous evening, by the end, returned, and with unerring aim sent it whizzing to the dog's astonished feet. Then he shut the window and, singing snatches of the Eton boat song, shaved with cold, too cold, water, lit the fire in his sitting-room with the ease born of constant practice, tidied yesterday's litter, blew the smuts from his papers, put on a saucepan to boil by the side of the phlegmatic kettle, laid his breakfast-cloth, and returned to tub and dress.

"Now," he said to himself, "the momentous question of what to wear presents itself. To make a good impression on the elders, tall hat, frock-coat, patent boots, and quiet tie would be the thing. But, personally, I rather fancy myself in tweeds and brown boots. How would Betty like it, though? No, I'll make a compromise. Black, short coat, microbe tie, nearly new, blue waistcoat, with red dits, and black trousers. Orthodox, and yet leaving a little room for originality. The microbe tie, a delightful thing in sudden reds and unexpected yellows, will do that for me, and the waistcoat—by the way, did I sew those buttons on, or not? Hullo! there's the kettle. Coming, sir."

He darted into the sitting-room, filled the teapot, put a couple of eggs into the saucepan, and, seduced by the warmth of the fire, stood in front of it with hands outstretched.

Between the bars, seated side by side, were two small black coals surrounded by glowing yellows. The smaller one had hair of delicate gold turning to brown, a sweet oval face, a little nose as straight and proud as the two clear grey eyes above it, and eyebrows which moved with every varying thought. The larger one, broad-shouldered, deep-chested, was clean-shaven and dark, not so good looking as he wished, but better looking than he thought. They were hand in hand, and on the third finger of the hand of the smaller one, the left hand, was a plain gold ring, in which was engraved "Chiche——" Crack!

"Oh! my hat! if that isn't an egg bust! Dreamer and romancist, attend to the cooking of thy inner requirements."

Deftly Rackett whipped out the eggs, on both of which sat a small white blob, and

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placed them in their cups. "So to breakfast. I will make a picture of myself afterwards and proceed to Elizabeth's church. A walk through the Park with her—Mr. and Mrs., and the youngsters ahead—will be divine. If I could only think how I'm to put it. 'Elizabeth, if you think you could ever care enough about me to——' Shop-un, and deuced nasty at that! Jove! and I'm frightfully sharp-set. If the other isn't all right, I must fall back on New Zealand mutton."

The other was all right. But the mutton was fallen on, nevertheless. Talking aloud, waving knife and fork as emphasisers one moment, singing snatches of an opera or a ballad the next, this briefless and whimsical person somewhat resembled, for sheer healthy optimism, that great creation of Defoe's, or better, that greater one of Cervantes', although, for that matter, neither was he bearded, stout, and dressed in skins with parrot on shoulder; nor tall, spare, and sunken-eyed, dressed in patched ironware with exaggerated lance and a tubby Sancho at his heels. But he was like them both, in that he was also capable of the deepest despair and the heaviest depression.

Leaving the breakfast table and whistling gaily, he strolled back into his bedroom to array himself in the clothes mentally decided upon. He flung the wardrobe open—nothing. He still whistled. He drew out the top drawer—nothing. The whistling became jerky. The other three followed all too easily. The whistling stopped. He crept, trembling, to the pegs behind the door, to the pegs at the far side of the wardrobe, to every peg in any corner of the room—nothing. Not a single coat, waistcoat, or a pair of trousers. The last night's bundle dangled before his eyes. "Good Heavens! what, in the name of all that's awful——"

Rackett fell heavily into a chair. Mrs. Biggles had been too unimaginative. Not even his oldest suit was left. Flannels, dress clothes, tweeds, everything had gone. All he had was a dressing-gown and pyjamas.

For three long hours, cold and miserable hours, he sat in that small bedroom chair, a more pitifully depressed and despairing object than Don Quixote or Robinson Crusoe at their most unfortunate moments. A succession of awful thoughts chased each other through his brain. They would wait, dinner would be spoilt, Mr. and Mrs. would drop him like a hot potato, the boys would chaff, Betty would never speak to him again. Oh! woe, woe! . . . . There would never be a Mrs. Chichele Rackett. Elizabeth would marry Freddy's beastly 'Varsity chum; he—Rackett—would grow grey, hipped, dyspeptic, a hater of humanity, an enemy to charity, egoistic, cantankerous, pessimistic——

"Good Heavens! what's that?"

Someone was knocking loudly on his oak. Who, in the name of fortune? . . . He couldn't go—in pyjamas—if it were the Prime Minister, the Lord Chief Justice, even Her Majesty the Queen.

"Mr. Rackett, are you in?"

It was the Queen, his Queen, Queen Elizabeth. He rushed to the door.

"Mr. Rackett, Mr. Rackett! Oh! Molly! what is the matter with him? He must be in, or there would be a ticket on the door. Oh! what am I to do?"

Rackett, with ear to the keyhole, shivering with cold and joy, drank in every word.

"We shall be most awfully late for dinner. Father will rave. The whole thing will be spoilt . . . . and I shall die of fright. Oh! Chichele, Chichele!"

Betty was crying, he could hear her. He couldn't open the door and let her see him like that—a blue-nosed thing in a dressing-gown; she would think he had gone mad.

Steadying his voice, he said huskily: "Miss Elizabeth, is that you?"

"Yes. . . . Oh! are you all right? Oh! are you all right? We've been knocking for ever so l—l—long. Please open the door!"

"I can't. I—I'm not well. . . . It's catching. . . . I will write to you. . . . I'm awfully sorry."

Betty began to dry her eyes, ashamed at having been caught.

"But what is it? You must open the door. I believe you're chaffing."

Rackett groaned in a way that made Elizabeth tremble. Chaffing! "Miss Elizabeth, why have you come here?"

"Oh! Mr. Rackett, I'm so frightened! I missed you at church—at least, we all did—thought perhaps you'd been working late, and were not up in time—at least, Freddy did—decided to drive here to see if we could take you back in the carriage. . . ."

Rackett became eager-eyed. "Miss Elizabeth, is Freddy in the carriage?"

"Yes."

"Send him up to me at once. And stay in the carriage, for Heaven's sake! At once, please."

Elizabeth drew herself up to her full height with the dignity of her royal namesake.

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"Oh! very well, Mr. Rackett, certainly. For the present, good morning. If you are too ill, pray don't trouble to come to dinner."

Rackett, with a mixture of despair and delight, heard the steps die away and, presently, heavier ones come nearer and nearer.

"I say, Rack, old chap, what on earth's the row?"

The door opened. A roar of laughter made every cobweb within a mile swing agitatedly.

"She took them all, the old sneak, did she? Well,

"'To Mr. Rackett's Queen Elizabeth!'"

I'm—— Look here, go to bed and get warm, and I'll drive home and back all I know. I've just time before dinner. I'll bring you the new suit I wore yesterday—a ripper. So long, dear old chap!"

* * * * *

Rackett and Freddy entered the dining-room at the instant all the company were seating themselves. General handshakings and introductions were followed by a whispering, a giggling, and a nudging of elbows. Rackett sank into the vacant chair by Elizabeth, looking at her pleadingly. For a moment her face retained its far-away look. Then, presently, came the first glimmer of a smile. The eyes—and they were grey eyes—turned to him and said: "I know. You are a darling old duck! My hand is waiting under the table-cloth."

At that moment, in a little, crowded, but very happy room in Paradise Court, a thin, squeaky voice, with tears in it, called out: "Now then, boys and gels, stand up all of yer, and drink to Mr. Rackett's Queen Elizabeth!"

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THE TRAIL OF THE DEAD:

THE STRANGE EXPERIENCE OF DR. ROBERT HARLAND.

By B. FLETCHER ROBINSON and J. MALCOLM FRASER.*

II.—THE MYSTERY OF THE LEMSDORF HAM.

HOW Rudolf Marnac, the venerable savant, brought about the death of his rival and critic, Professor Von Stockmar, of Heidelberg University, I have already explained. I have, moreover, related the accident by which my cousin, Sir Henry Graden, the famous explorer and scientist, chanced to be visiting me, a student of medicine at the German University; and I have endeavoured to outline the steps by which the baronet arrived at the discovery of the crime that had been committed. I have now to tell of the pursuit of Marnac, the murderer, a pursuit as strange in its outset as it was terrible in its conclusion. For this, the first adventure in the chase of this inhuman monster, it may be said that I have chosen a fanciful title. Yet "The Mystery of the Lemsdorf Ham" is too appropriate to be neglected for that reason.

At the first the Heidelberg police met our theory of Von Stockmar's death with incredulity. When they moved in earnest, it was too late; all trace of Professor Marnac had been lost. It was discovered that he had taken from his rooms a small travelling valise and a considerable sum in ready money; but beyond these facts nothing was known; even his manner of leaving Heidelberg was a mystery.

For myself, the weeks that followed were in every respect intolerable. From a peaceful student I found myself transformed into a secret ally of the police, an unhappy being whose privacy was liable to be disturbed at all hours by some inquisitive official. Even worse, the authorities had detained my cousin, and those who are intimates of Sir Henry Graden will understand that I suffered at his hands. In the capture of the murderer—as we knew Marnac to be—he took a passionate interest. He was for ever in my rooms, denouncing the authorities for their delay, advancing theories, or cursing his own inaction. The lieutenant in charge of the Heidelberg police went in absolute terror of the Englishman, and, indeed, refused all interviews in which he was not adequately protected by his satellites.

On a calm October morning I was sitting reading by my window, thankful of the momentary quiet I enjoyed, when the door burst open and my cousin come frolicking into the room. I admit the absurdity of the expression when applied to a middle-aged giant of sixteen stone; but frolicking describes it. Without a word of apology he seized my book, a new edition of Smallwood's "Digestive Organs of Molluscs," and flung it into the fireplace. It was too much.

"Henry Graden," said I, starting up indignantly, "you are my cousin, but you presume on that relationship. These schoolboy antics are insupportable."

"Capital, Robert! capital!" he answered, regarding me with a comical expression. "By Gad! there's stuff in the boy! You'd like to punch my head, I suppose?"

I was somewhat ashamed of my outburst, and picked up the book, which was greatly damaged, before I replied.

"It's all very well, cousin Graden," I said, sulkily enough. "But between you and the police, I am worried to death."

"Good! Then you can have no objection to leaving Heidelberg this afternoon."

"Leave Heidelberg? Why should I leave Heidelberg?"

He strode over to where I stood and laid his great hand on my shoulder with a touch that implied an apology.

"A schoolboy you called me just now. That's just what I am, a schoolboy let loose in the playground. The police have raised their embargo. An address which will bring me when they have need of my evidence—that is all they ask. Now, I want a travelling companion—a man I can trust. You can guess my errand, Cousin Robert. Before a week is out I shall have my hand on him, I shall, by Heaven! You will come

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with me? Good lad, I knew it. The train leaves at three. I'll call for you."

"But where are we going?" I shouted, running to the door; for already he was down a score of stairs.

"St. Petersburg. You have a passport?"

"Yes—but Cousin Graden, Cousin Graden, I say——"

It was no use. I heard the street door slam behind him. St. Petersburg—and the winter coming on. Eugh! I had always detested cold. But next to escaping misfortune it is best to possess a philosophic mind. I commenced to pack my bag with my warmest underwear.

At thirty-five minutes past two, Graden sent up word to say that he had a cab waiting my pleasure, and in three minutes more my luggage was upon it. Half-way down the main street we chanced upon Mossel, the fat lieutenant of police. He glanced at us keenly with, as I thought, a certain suspicion. Graden saluted him coldly, muttering maledictions upon him for a stupid ass. There was no great friendship between the two. I paid the cab while my cousin saw to the tickets. Five marks provided us with a subservient guard and an empty carriage.

"And what are your plans for this intolerable Petersburg expedition?" I asked, as the train thumped its way out of the station.

"We are not going to St. Petersburg. We are going to Lemsdorf."

"To Lemsdorf! I have never heard of the place."

"No more had I an hour ago. Allow me to discover it."

He pulled a red-bound Baedeker out of his pocket and fluttered through the pages.

"Here we have it—'Lemsdorf: fourteen to fifteen hours from Berlin. Rising town in West Prussia. 12,000 inhabitants. Large dye-works. 'Prinz von Preussen,' 'Goldner Adler' hotels well spoken of. Cab from the station, 75 pg. Little of historical interest. Excursions to Denker and the Huren, a wild and desolate district with several large lakes, on the Russian frontier.' Not altogether an inviting prospect at the latter end of October, eh, Cousin Robert?"

"I did not imagine we were going there for pleasure."

"Pessimist! Do neither the 'Prinz von Prussen' nor the 'Goldner Adler,' 'well spoken of,' as Baedeker describes these hostelries, attract you? Then the dye-works, they are sure to be interesting."

"Henry Graden," cried I with determination, "you try me too far! I am as eager as yourself that this criminal should be brought to justice. For this reason alone I have every right to know the why and wherefore of an expedition which will entail upon me, as I see clearly, the most extraordinary discomforts."

"It seems a pity, my dear cousin, that Nature, which endowed you with so many admirable qualities, should have omitted the saving grace of humour," he rejoined. And then changing his tone to a greater sobriety: "You shall hear all that I know or conjecture. It will, at least, help us on our journey.

"First, as to the facts at my disposal. For myself, I had heard much of Rudolf Marnac, but only as a Heidelberg professor of distinction, whose stupendous effort, 'Science and Belief,' had set educated Europe by the ears. From you I learnt of his quarrel with Von Stockmar, a quarrel originating in the latter's attack on the work in question, of which Marnac was inordinately vain. Then came the chain of facts that proved—to our mind, at least—that Marnac had murdered his colleague with a diabolical ingenuity. Could such a crime be inspired by a quarrel so trifling? It was almost past belief. Further evidence was necessary; and this evidence the investigations of the police have supplied.

"When I learnt that his father, Jean Marnac, had died in a Paris asylum, I began to see my way. But it was the statements of his servants that cleared my last doubt. An eccentricity which at one time amused them had of late been changed to a violence that filled them with terror. He had presented them with copies of the book, elaborately bound. A housekeeper who had served him for twenty years was loaded with abuse and discharged because the old creature admitted that she could not follow his arguments. He was the victim of a partial mania. Such cases are not uncommon.

"Whither had this dangerous creature fled? It seemed a mystery insoluble. He was well provided with money; on all topics but one he was admirably sensible. The police admitted that he had beaten them. But only yesterday I obtained a clue. It may be valueless; but for myself, I think otherwise. At least it is worth the journey I am asking you to make in my company.

"At my urgent request the police admitted me to his rooms. His papers they had already examined, without result. I found that he possessed a fine library. I am a

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book-lover, and my first step was to examine it. Tucked away in a corner of a shelf, yet within easy reach of his customary chair, I found a volume. It was typical of the man that it should be elegantly bound. Within were collected the hostile criticisms with which his book had been loaded. The more severe were scribbled over with the vilest epithets. Von Stockmar was personally

"There was no one visible."

threatened, as was also a certain Mechersky, a professor of the Imperial University at Petersburg. I abstracted the volume. You may like to examine it."

He drew it from the capacious pocket of his travelling ulster and gave it to me. The cover was of the choicest morocco ; upon it, in gold, were emblazoned the arms of the University. It was a triumph of the binder's art, yet I handled it with a singular feeling of disgust.

The interior was oddly divided. The greater part consisted of clippings from papers and magazines, neatly gummed upon blank pages. But here and there were interpolated pamphlets, held in their place by elastic bands. In contrast with this orderly arrangement, scarcely a page but was defaced by pencilled remarks, satirical or abusive. I ran through them hastily until I came upon the article which bore Mechersky's name, extracted apparently from some French review. Its severity seemed to have lashed Marnac to fury. It was covered with a maze of pencillings. But my attention was soon centred on a portion of the text which, being underlined in red, stood out from the page with some prominence. "The author of 'Science and Belief,'" for thus it ran, "seems to have lost touch with humanity. His deductions might be correct if men were bloodless, merciless automatons. He regards them as might some reptile—let us say, a toad scientifically inclined." Across this criticism, which seemed to me unnecessarily severe, was written in German: "Infamous scoundrel! Would that I might crush you like a toad!"

"A curious wish," I said, pointing to the passage.

"And from Marnac a most dangerous one," he answered. "I can only hope we shall reach Lemsdorf in time."

"Lemsdorf again! And why Lemsdorf?"

"For the excellent reason, Cousin Robert, that Mechersky, who comes of land-owning Polish stock, is holiday-making at Castle Oster, a place he has in that neighbourhood. And as sure as I sit here, where Mechersky is, there will be that madman, Rudolf Marnac. If he means to murder the man, he will have had nigh on a month to bring it off. Heaven grant that we're in time!"

The tone in which he spoke thrilled me with a dreadful anxiety. The danger was

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indefinable; but fear draws its darkest terrors from the unknown.

"One thing more," I said. "How did you discover Mechersky's whereabouts?"

"I had thought him at St. Petersburg; but a wire to a friend there gave me the information I required."

I have neither the necessity nor the inclination to dwell on that journey. It was very late when we rolled into the station of the good town of Leipsic, where we spent the night at a convenient hotel. Yet it was at an early hour that Graden roused me from a tired sleep to catch the Posen express. The country through which we now journeyed was of a melancholy similitude, and the broad plains, though reasonably cultivated, affected me with a mental depression which the cheery efforts of my companion could not conquer. The day was drawing to its close as we reached Posen and passed through that fortress city into a land of desolation. Gloomy pine woods, great lakes on which the dying sun threw patches of ruddy gold, forlorn heaths and swamps that, as I imagined, could scarce be equalled for sheer dismalness of aspect, slid by us in a never-ending chain. Save for the Eastern sky, glorified by the fiery sunset, the heavens were obscured by ponderous clouds of muddy grey that foretell the first snow of winter. Darkness had fallen when we changed carriages at a junction; but it was close upon midnight before my cousin, who had been sitting with a Continental Bradshaw on his knees, thrust his head out of the window and cried that the lights of Lemsdorf were in sight. Our luggage was piled upon an antiquated cab, and in ten minutes more the host of the "Goldner Adler," a thin, handsome Pole, was bowing a stately welcome to his guests. Supper—and then to bed.

The room assigned me was an oak-panelled apartment of considerable size, and the single candle with which I was provided seemed only to deepen the lurking shadows round the walls. The huge china stove failed to warm a place so thoroughly ventilated by draughts. At another time the cause of our journey, combined with the uncanny nature of these surroundings, might have acted on my nerves. But I was too weary, too angry with my present discomfort, to give opportunity to fanciful terrors. The bed was small, and in all probability damp. I took off my coat, rolled myself in a thick travelling rug, heaped the clothes upon me, and blowing out the candle I had placed on a table at my elbow, lay down to sleep.

How long I may have slept I cannot say, but I was awakened by a sudden flash of light that struck like a blow through the darkness. For a score of seconds, it may have been, I lay motionless. The room was in utter darkness and silence. Then I heard a footfall, a creaking of a door. I sprang from my bed, only to trip and fall heavily over the rug which I had carried with me. I groped for the table, found it, and lit the candle, crouching, half expectant of some attack when I should reveal myself. I looked keenly about me—the room was empty.

But I had had a visitor, for the door was still ajar. I ran to it and, shading the light with my hand, peered down the passage. There was no one visible. I returned to the room, this time locking the door securely. Perhaps, after all, I reasoned, there had been no cause for my alarm. Some fellow-guest might have mistaken his chamber, retiring quickly on discovering his error. This argument heartened me, for, to be honest, I was shaken not a little. I examined the room carefully, without result; and then, after a composing cigarette, slipped back into bed, leaving the candle burning in the centre of the room.

It snowed that night, and to some effect, as the morning light showed me. The broad, slovenly street beneath my window was thickly coated; and though the fall had ceased, a dull sky, streaked as with muddy whitewash, threatened a further downfall. It was bitterly cold, and I flung on my clothes in a vile temper.

Graden was meditating before the stove when I entered our breakfast-room, with the strange book he had shown me during the journey in his hands.

"You look pale as a ghost. Are you quite fit?" he asked kindly.

"Oh, yes; though my night was not particularly peaceful."

"What do you mean?"

I told him briefly of my unknown visitor. He seemed greatly interested, questioning me minutely on various points.

"Your theory may be correct," he concluded. "Some guest may have mistaken his chamber and hurried off on discovering his mistake. Yet, if he had a light with him, how came he to make such an obvious error; whereas, if it was the striking of a match that roused you, what was the man doing wandering in the dark?"

"To tell the truth, when I first woke, I imagined it was Marnac himself."

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"I have considered that point. I do not think it could have been he."

"And why?"

"Before you were down this morning I had a talk with our landlord. The guests at his house are of two classes—commercial travellers and those having business at the dye-works. They do not stay long—usually a week at most. Of the nine which he now has, none has exceeded that limit. He knows them all personally—six commercials, two dye-works men, and a rich Englishman, one George Wakefield, who has been staying with some magnate in the neighbourhood. But here is Herr Reski himself."

"'Gentlemen,' said the landlord, bowing low, 'your sleigh is at the door.'"

"Gentlemen," said the landlord, bowing low, "your sleigh is at the door."

"How far is it, then, to Castle Oster?" I asked him.

"Close on twenty miles; and with this fresh snow it will be heavy going."

Ten minutes later we slid on our silent runners, to the tinkle of the bells, out through the squalid, sprawling town, out through the wooden hovels of the suburbs, out past the dye-works, with their tall, melancholy chimneys, out into the snow-clad levels beyond, and there from out of the east there sprang upon us a great and bitter wind, chilled by its long journey over the boundless steppes

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of frozen Russia. Here and there, across the plains, a whiff of powdery snow, like the smoke of heavy guns, would leap up before the fiercer blasts, only to burst and fall as they lulled once more. To the south and east the pine-woods ranged their formal ranks, black against the dazzling carpet at their feet. It was a scene of utter desolation.

We drove in silence. Graden sat in a huddled mass, his chin buried in the great woollen comforter he wore, staring out over the plain with fixed, introspective eyes. For myself, I sat amongst the rugs beside him in vague speculation. What could be this danger that threatened the scientist from St. Petersburg in his home at Castle Oster? After all, might not our whole journey be a folly born of Graden's imaginings, a blind guess that had dragged us half across Europe? I shivered, and shivering, muttered anathemas on the climate.

We entered the forest. On every hand stood the pines, stretching away in long, melancholy avenues floored with drifted snow. The laden branches bowed before us, now and again, at the whirl of a passing gust, flinging their burdens from them. Once a willow grouse, white as the snow beneath it, swept on steady wing through the trees. Once from the far, far distance, borne upon the eastern breeze, there came a cry, a weird, hopeless echo in the air, that set the horses snorting. I knew what it must be—a wolf who felt the first pangs of the winter's hunger gathering round him. But there was no sign of man nor marks of sleigh tracks on the newly fallen snow.

We did not travel fast, though our driver did his best. The snow had not hardened and settled into that enchanting surface on which the runners speed so swiftly. Midday was past before we saw, through a sudden gap in the forest, a rising mound crowned with a low, grey building. "Castle Oster!" cried our driver, turning in his seat to claim our attention. In ten minutes more we had halted at a gate set in a high stone wall.

Before we were clear of our rugs the driver had slipped from his perch and tugged at a rusty iron bell-pull. We waited without an answer. Again he rang; but Graden did not wait the result. The door was not bolted; it opened to his vigorous arm, and we followed him into the broad courtyard of the Castle.

Before us sprawled the main building, flanked by little towers, like the pepper-box turrets of an old Scotch mansion. The windows were shuttered; the chimneys were smokeless save for one above the central porch, from which a dark plume rose and trailed away to the westward—the solitary sign of habitation. To our right and left were ranged outbuildings, stables, coach-houses, and the like; but all in a condition of ruinous decay. Patches fallen from the roofs laid bare the rafters; from the broken gutters trailed long pendants of ice. Against the old doors the snow had piled itself in heavy drifts. No sound broke the brooding stillness. It was a picture distressingly forlorn.

"Has Professor Mechersky, then, no servants?" asked Graden of our driver. I noticed that he hushed his voice in speaking; he, too, felt the uncanny influence of the place.

"Two, mein Herr—a man and a woman. I cannot think where they can be."

"I had understood he was a man of means. Why does he allow this disrepair?"

"I do not think the Professor cares. He shuts himself up with his experiments, when he is here—which is not often now. His rooms look to the south on the other side. For the rest, the house is not furnished."

"Well, I suppose there is a servant who will—— Heavens! what is that?"

From somewhere within the house there came a shriek, a cry of supreme terror. Again and yet again it was repeated before it shrank away into silence. Graden ran across the court to the main door, and I was hard upon his heels. He pulled the bell and hammered fiercely upon the heavy oak panels; but no one answered.

"I don't believe the thing is bolted," said he. "Keep the handle turned, and let me try what I can do."

He stepped back a dozen paces, and then came running at the door like a bull. The giant caught it squarely with the point of his shoulder; there was a sharp crack; the next instant we were both sprawling on the floor within.

We found ourselves in a great and dusty hall, indifferently lighted. Against the wall on my right I could dimly discern the figure of a woman crouched on the floor, sobbing bitterly, her face buried in her hands. She did not move, despite our violent entrance. At the foot of the main staircase an old man was bending over a something that lay motionless. He looked up at us with a white, pitiful face.

"He is dead—the master is dead!" he whimpered.

Graden strode up to him, and I followed at his heels.

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Professor Peter Mechersky—for such I knew it must be—lay huddled under an old grey cloak that spread wing-wise from his neck, a blot upon the polished oak of the floor. From his face, thin though it was and wasted with disease, he must have been a middle-aged man who had preserved a singular beauty. He had died as a child might fall asleep. Yet the horror that he had escaped he had left to the living; for his attitude was abnormal, impossible, and ghastly to behold.

It was not right that a body should resemble an egg that is broken.

My cousin swept aside the cloak for a moment, and replaced it reverently, though with a hand that trembled.

"He has not a sound bone in his body," he muttered, and then, turning to the old servant, "How did this happen?" said he.

"He had been ill for some weeks, mein Herr, and we begged him not to leave his room. But to-day he declared himself better; he insisted that he should descend to the library. Half way down the stairs he tripped and fell. I ran to his side and found him, as you see him, crouched—like—like——"

"Like a toad?"

"Yes, mein Herr, like a toad."

The man broke into hysterical weeping. Graden searched in his pocket, produced a flask of brandy, and prescribed a liberal dose. He seemed to revive under its influence.

"The Englishman, Herr Wakefield, was most anxious about my master's health," he stammered out. "The Herr Professor became indisposed some ten days after his arrival; since then he has been most kind, most considerate, sitting by the master's bed for hours. He would allow no other doctor to visit the master. He is a kind, good man, this doctor, the Herr Wakefield."

"So I believe. How came he to know your master?"

"I am not sure; but I think he brought a letter of introduction from a Professor Marnac, of Heidelberg, a gentleman of whom my master disapproved, yet admired for his learning."

"And this Englishman, did he prescribe for your master?"

"Of course. They loved each other, and sat late into the night in their discussions. When my poor master was taken ill, Herr Wakefield took complete charge of him. Ach! If he did but know what had happened!"

"Then he is not here?"

"No; he drove to Lemsdorf yesterday afternoon. He had to return to his own country. Ach! If he did but know!"

It was plain enough—Marnac the linguist was Wakefield the Englishman. It was he, new from this thing that he had done, who had come creeping to my room in the night, being suspicious of the strangers from the South. It was he that had brought about this mysterious horror. I turned from the poor monstrosity upon the floor and leant, shuddering, against the wall. As I did so, Graden strode past me to the open door.

"Driver, can your horses take us back?" I heard him say.

"Not without rest and feed, mein Herr. The snow was very bad, and they are tired."

"Would a hundred marks to the driver assist them?"

"It is impossible. They could not reach half-way. Wait, mein Herr, and it may be done."

My cousin came up to me and laid his great hand upon my shoulder.

"I'm afraid it's the truth," he said. And then turning to the dead man's servant, "Your master—had he horses?" he asked.

"Three, mein Herr, but they have not yet returned from Lemsdorf, where they went this morning with the big sleigh for provisions."

With a sharp order Graden sent our driver hurrying to the stables. Then, with his arm linked in mine, we followed the old servant into a low-roofed dining-hall. As I dropped upon an oak settle before the great china stove, he thrust his flask into my hands and, with a word of encouragement, slipped away. I knew that he was re-examining the body, but, doctor though I was, the spirit of investigation had gone out of me. I could no more have assisted him than a medical student can watch, unmoved, his first operation.

In about twenty minutes he returned, bearing a tray upon which was set bread and cheese, flanking a great ham. I turned from the food with disgust; but my cousin fell to diligently, complaining the while at my folly in not eating when I had the chance.

"You must pull yourself together," he protested, with his mouth full. "Try this ham now. It isn't half bad."

More to humour him than with any intention of following his advice, I drew my seat to the table.

"Come, now, that's better," he cried, carving away. "To tell the truth, I haven't the slightest idea what that devil Marnac has been up to. But what I do know is

"Graden sprang out of the sleigh and strode up to the angry farmer."

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that we've got to catch him—dead or alive. Therefore I recommend you to stoke up your body with this excellent—hallo!"

Knife and fork in the air, he sat motionless, staring at the dish before him.

"What's the matter now?" I asked irritably; for, indeed, his hearty appetite annoyed me.

For answer he rose and pealed the bell. The old manservant, with the brandy flushing his white cheeks, tottered into the room.

"I am sorry to trouble you," said Graden courteously, "but we both set such store by your hams that we wish to know where they can be obtained. Do you cure them yourself?"

"No, mein Herr, but it is done near by," answered the man, with a look of blank surprise.

"Indeed. The Lemsdorf ham is a discovery; it should make a stir. I wonder I had not heard of its merits before."

"You see, mein Herr, the big curing station has not long been established."

"A new enterprise?"

"Yes, mein Herr. It belongs to Herr Drobin, a South German. Two years ago he took the big farm at Gran, which you passed on your way here. It is this side of the dye-works. He has many pigs in the forest. His hams are becoming famous from Warsaw to Königsberg. It is said he has some secret in the feeding or curing—no one knows which."

"Thank you—that is all."

The door was scarcely shut when I turned hotly upon Graden. "How dare you sit here in this house of murder and talk of the excellence of the food?" I cried furiously. "It is shameful, indecent!"

"Yet we will visit the farm of Gran on our way back. I have some little inquiries to make."

"We shall do nothing of the sort," I snarled.

"If you were a soldier or an explorer, Cousin Robert," he said, leaning across and tapping me kindly on the arm, "you would know that in any expedition one alone can be responsible. The rest obey, whether they be few or many. As it is, I beg you to recognise that fact and to obey."

He was right, and I knew it. But to save appearances I walked to the window and stood drumming upon it with my fingers for a while before I answered him.

"Well, do as you please," I said at length.

"I think the sleigh may be ready by now," he said. "Come, let us go out and inquire."

There is no need to dwell on this miserable drive. The tired horses dragged slowly forward, the driver, sullen and frightened, urging them on with blows and curses. Mile after mile of pine-woods marched past us, but we did not speak, crouching in the furs. At last, as night was falling, we reached the edge of the forest and swung aside from the main road into a track that skirted the edge of the pines. The ground sank away into a hollow like the palm of the hand. At the lowest point I could see a square, wooden building flanked by rows of outbuildings. It was, as I imagined, the farm of Gran. But before we reached it, our driver suddenly drew up his horses. A man was advancing towards us through the trees. Our driver turned, and with a wave of the whip explained the situation.

"It is Herr Drobin," said he.

I was not favourably impressed with this breeder of pigs. He was an elderly man, full bodied, with white hair, that stuck out stiffly from under his fur cap, a red, bulbous nose, and shifty, suspicious eyes. He saluted us with a touch of his cap in military fashion.

"And what is your business, gentlemen?" he asked.

"It is less business than gratitude," said Graden courteously. "We have made this little pilgrimage to thank the producer of the Lemsdorf hams."

"You are not dealers, then?"

"No, but I——"

"Then take yourself off!"

"Herr Drobin!"

"Go! clear out! Do I not make myself plain?" he cried, his flushed face nodding in time to his violent gesticulations. "I will have no spies about the place!"

Graden sprang out of the sleigh and strode up to the angry farmer. For a moment I thought there would be a scrimmage; but the huge bulk of his antagonist was not without its effect upon the German. I have often noticed that great stature has a curiously soothing influence on the bad temper of an opponent.

"Why did you call me a spy?" demanded my cousin.

"The people about here gossip of some secret I hold," he answered sulkily. "Perhaps they speak true; perhaps false. Who can say? At least, I am no longer a fool; my eyes have been opened. 'You have a good thing here, Herr Drobin. There is a great future before you, if only you keep your knowledge to yourself,' said the Englishman to me. 'If strangers come asking

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questions, they will be spies; send them away.' It was fine advice he gave me; anyone can see that. So be off with you!"

"I am an Englishman myself, Herr Drobin. May I ask my compatriot's name?"

"I do not remember."

"What, then, was he like?"

"I cannot describe him."

"You are discreet, Herr Drobin. Come, now, let us strike a bargain. I will make a guess at your secret; if I am right, you will tell me what you know of this Englishman."

The German started back, staring at Graden with little, bloodshot eyes, in which surprise and fury were oddly mingled. Then, side by side, they stepped into the shadow of the pines, whispering together.

"They are all liars, these Germans," said our driver confidentially, turning to me. "For myself, I am a Pole."

"You heard what was said. Do you know anything of this English visitor to Herr Drobin?"

"Most certainly, mein Herr. He was of the name of Wakefield. He has stayed several nights at the 'Goldner Adler.' For the rest, he has been the guest of him who lived out there," and he made a gesture down the road that we had come.

A nameless fear took me by the throat—a fear of unknown possibilities. I would have questioned the man more, but at that moment Graden and the farmer emerged from the shadow of the pines. The latter had abandoned his truculent manner. Indeed, he seemed oddly subservient. As Graden stepped into the sleigh, the man bowed low a curtsy, which my cousin answered with a curt nod of dismissal.

"Drive on!" he cried, and once more we were ploughing our way back to the Lemsdorf road.

"Did you ever study the properties of the root called madder, commonly known as a dye?" asked my cousin suddenly.

"No."

"Then I must explain from the beginning. It is right that you should hear."

He pulled the flaps of his deerstalker cap over his ears—indeed, it was bitter cold—and settled himself amongst the rugs. I caught the outline of his face—the jaws set, the cheeks drawn, the eye hard and keen, the whole purposeful and remorseless.

"When I was slicing the ham to-day," he continued, "an odd thing happened. My knife struck the bone and passed through it as if it had been putty. At a second glance I noticed that the interior of the section so divided was of a brownish red. It set me thinking. I began to remember certain facts. The talk of the old servant concerning a secret held by the owner of the pig-farm at Gran concentrated my suspicions, the proximity of the dye-works confirmed them. I was almost certain of Herr Drobin's secret before he charged me with coming to steal it.

"Let me explain. Madder is a dye, as you know. But administered to man or beast, it has the curious effect of colouring and pulping the bones to a gristle. It is used sparingly on a few South German pig-farms, that the hams may appear attractive when carved. Herr Drobin introduced it into German Poland. He obtained the root as he required it by arrangement with the dye-works. Perhaps their presence suggested the idea to him.

"Whether or no Marnac knew of the uses of madder before he came to Lemsdorf, I cannot tell. From my talk with Drobin it would seem that his visit to his farm was more or less of an accident. But, either way, the visit gave him the weapon by which he 'might make a toad' of his enemy. That bitter criticism, you may be sure, was for ever running in his diseased brain. The practical details he learnt at the farm would help him in—what he had undertaken. His advice to that old German was a sound move, designed to cover his visits to the farm and the suspicions they might afterwards have excited.

"His method of getting into touch with his victim was simple. He introduced himself as an Englishman by a letter which he himself wrote in his capacity of Heidelberg professor, well knowing that the police had not made public their suspicions of him. He assumed the name of Wakefield—the first that suggested itself to him—and the nationality of an Englishman, for, as we know, he spoke the language to perfection. He administered madder in some form until Mechersky grew ill; after which, in his position of medical attendant, the rest was easy. He fled when he knew that the end of the tragedy was at hand, that every bone of his victim was fragile as thin glass. Probably he caught a momentary glimpse of us in the 'Goldner Adler'; and his midnight visit was to assure himself of your identity. You were in great peril that night, Cousin Robert; I shudder to think how great.

"He has probably escaped to-day; there

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is a fast train to the west at twelve o'clock he could catch. But I vow before Heaven, I vow before you as my witness, that I will pursue this fiend until I have run him down. Heaven knows I have no hatred towards him. I feel to him as a man might feel towards a mad dog which is a danger to the peaceful men, women, and children of his village. It is the duty of the citizen to risk his life in its capture."

"Where do we go now?" I asked.

"To the railway. We must gather what news we can."

The winter night was falling drear and cold when our tired horses staggered up to the station door. I scrambled out, hungry, cramped, exhausted in body and mind, and followed my cousin within. The station was empty at the moment save for a distant corner where a man sat huddled on a travelling valise. We advanced at once upon him. When we were a dozen feet away, he started up and faced us.

It was Mossel, the lieutenant of the Heidelberg police.

"Any luck, mein Herr?" said he to Graden.

"What in the world are you doing here?" was the astonished answer.

"Well, mein Herr, I thought you knew something, and followed you. When I arrived this morning, I said to myself: 'The great white English ferret will be at work to-day searching for the rat. I will wait at the station like a net into which Mr. Ferret may turn the rat.'"

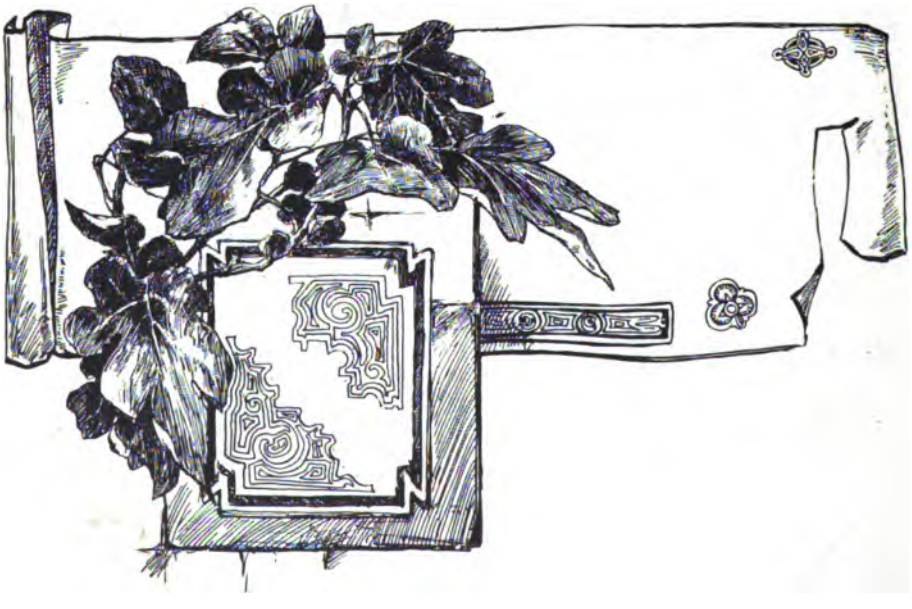
Graden skipped up to him and shook him warmly by the hand.

"Capital, Mossel, capital! And you—had the net any luck?"

"The net was sitting upon the rat's luggage when you arrived this moment. The net has been here for five hours, and is cold and hungry. The net is of opinion that the rat must have seen him and abandoned his luggage. He has not left by train."

"But he can escape in no other way. We have him, Mossel, we have him."

"So it would seem," said the lieutenant calmly.



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THE VICEREGAL RULE OF INDIA.

By SIR EDWIN ARNOLD, K.C.I.E., C.S.I.*

I AM to speak here of the high office, and splendid but onerous duties, of Indian Viceroy. At the beginning of his clever but necessarily superficial book, entitled "In India," the late Mr. G. W. Steevens has the following passage describing the landing at Bombay, which he happened to witness, of the present Viceroy, Lord Curzon :—

"Boom! came the first gun from the white warship, the first of thirty-one. A launch flickered across the dazzling water. Along the parapet glided a funnel and the point of a flagstaff. The uniforms and Court suits and academic gowns clustered at the head of the steps. They stood for one minute—two—three—in the bunched but shifting group that means greeting and introduction, then broke. 'God save the Queen!' crashed from the band; all stood uncovered; and the new Viceroy stepped serenely into his government. A slow procession along the aisle; a pause and a silence which hinted that the Corporation of Bombay was delivering an address; a few clear-cut sentences of reply; clapping; a grey hat bowing from a carriage; the scrunch of wheels; red and white lance-pennons whirling into column—and the first glimpse of India breaks like a kaleidoscope on the gaze of him who is to govern her."

"A grey hat bowing from a carriage"—that is what this keen observer saw; and that was how the latest Viceroy of India came to his important post—greatest and highest of all which a man not of royal rank or of presidential dignity can occupy, and with traditions of power and influence beyond all attaching to many diadems.

From the portrait] [in Government House, Calcutta.

LORD CLIVE.

Founder of the Indian Empire. First British Governor in India. Born 1725, died 1774.

An account of the same scene may be read in the bright opening pages of Lady Dufferin's two charming volumes, entitled: "Our Viceregal Life in India"; and there, too, will be found the same contrast between the simplicities of the human side of the accession of a new Governor-General appointed to sway the Eastern Empire of the British Monarch, and the singular lustres and responsibilities of that office. The opening wonders of India evidently amazed the Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava herself. She wrote :—

"Bombay, December 8th.—I wish it were possible for me to give you even a faint idea of the splendour of the landing at Bombay, but it was such a magnificent sight that it seems almost useless to try to describe it. I believe that we shall never, even in India, see anything to compare with it again."

Without doubt, to one so intelligent and imaginative as my illustrious friend Lady Dufferin, there was visible to her mind, beyond the outward picturesqueness of a new Viceroy's arrival in his Empire, the mighty majesty of the task which he undertakes, the extraordinary area of his rule, the prodigiousness of the trust laid upon him by his Sovereign and his destiny, and the many

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From a portrait by] [*Masquerier*

WARREN HASTINGS.
Governor-General of British India, 1774-1785.

serious risks, as well as signal opportunities, of that position. Briefly, it is the proudest and most onerous which can be reached by any public man in English official life, and I will here briefly essay to convey some information as to this great station, this grave and responsible post of Viceroy of India, coupled so constantly, as the above extracts show it is, with personal modesty and self-distrust in the succeeding occupants.

The "grey hat" of Lord Curzon belonged to, and brings up to present dates, the line of a most remarkable dynasty of rulers, almost all of them capable men, and some of eminent administrative ability.

True, the political history of the British in India begins no further back than 1639 A.D., when Thomas Day founded Fort St. George at Madras. We were so humble then that we paid a yearly tribute of twelve hundred pagodas to the Mogul Sultan, Aurangzeb, and surrendered Madras to a French squadron almost without a blow, Dupleix at that time being Governor of Pondicherri. But, in truth—as I have elsewhere written—if we will trace the special river of British Indian history to its source, it may be demonstrated that the grandeur which Lord Curzon went out to inherit and assume derives itself entirely from a doctor's prescription.

In 1636 A.D., the daughter-in-law of Shah Jehan, and favourite wife of Sultan Shuja, Nawab of Bengal, who was the second son of the Great Mogul, lay sick of a malady beyond the skill of all his Mohammedan *hakims*. Distressed at the danger of one so fair and precious, the Nawab called to his aid the surgeon of the East India Company's ship *Hopewell*, by name Gabriel Broughton, a

THE TRIAL OF WARREN HASTINGS IN WESTMINSTER HALL, 1788-1795.

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clever young doctor, who, although not allowed to see the beautiful face of his royal patient, all the same effected a perfect cure. The grateful prince asked him to name his own fee, whereupon Broughton begged for and obtained a firman granting permission to the East India Company to trade throughout the dominions of the great Moguls and giving them land to build a factory, which factory has since grown up to become the stately city of Calcutta.

But Clive, the young "writer," was awaiting his hour in India, and with his energy and indisputable genius the strange story of England in India definitely commenced. The victories of Arcot and Plassey started and established the orderly succession of Governor-Generals, as they were then called, and Plassey, be it remembered, was not fought until 1757. In 1758, Clive was nominated first Governor of all the East India Company's settlements in Bengal. And after him, a line of some five-and-twenty vice-rulers has carried the British Rāj through its many vicissitudes of glory and of peril.

Warren Hastings organised the Empire which Clive had founded. He ruled for

From a portrait by] [*J. S. Copley, R.A.*

THE MARQUESS OF CORNWALLIS.

Governor-General of India, 1786-1793.

THE DELIVERY OF THE DEFINITIVE TREATY BY THE HOSTAGE PRINCES INTO THE HANDS OF LORD CORNWALLIS.

From the picture by M. Brown.

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thirteen years; and while she was losing her American Colonies, England was thus rapidly enlarging her Indian Possessions. Clive and Hastings had been commoners. Lord Cornwallis, who succeeded, was a great nobleman. But to this day the name of Hastings is remembered among all others in Bengal, and it is perhaps less evidence of his masterfulness and abiding fame to see statues and pictures of him in Calcutta, and to traverse squares and streets there called after the famous Duke of Wellington, and that renowned soldier, along with Lake, won memorable victories for "John Company."

But the merchants of Cornhill, who thus "held the East in fee," trembled at the too brilliant fortunes forced upon them. Those were the days when it took half a year to sail to India, and when the Court of Directors, time after time at their grand farewell banquets, would earnestly urge upon each Governor not to extend their territory,

EMBASSY OF HYDERBECK TO CALCUTTA FROM THE VIZIER OF OUDE BY THE WAY OF SATNA, IN THE YEAR 1788, TO MEET LORD CORNWALLIS.

From the painting by Goffany.

statesman, than to hear the Bengali black nurses still singing to their white babies—

"Hathi par howdah, ghora par jeen,
Juldi bahir jata Warin Hasteen!"

That is to say—

"The howdah's on the elephant, the saddle's on the steed,
And Warren Hastings soon will come a-riding forth at speed."

Then ensued Sir John Shore, with an uneventful record, and after him Mr. Pitt's friend and nominee, the Marquess of Wellesley, who was the first to entertain and to proclaim the policy that all India must eventually become British. The Marquess had for his General, Sir Arthur Wellesley, afterwards would receive from each in turn passionate pledges of abstinence and economy, and then in the course of a year or so would have to open flaming despatches which told with reluctant pride how another and another vast province had been brought into the golden round of the Company's dominion. They sent Cornwallis out a second time to check this flood of triumph, and when he died, an old and weary man, he was replaced by Sir George Barlow, who did very much as he was ordered, and for a while actually contracted our Eastern boundaries.

Lord Minto, from 1807 to 1813, also endeavoured to tread the path of self-denial, but was followed by the Marquess of Hastings,

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From a portrait by] [*George Richmond.*

SIR JOHN SHORE, AFTERWARDS LORD TEIGNMOUTH.
Governor-General, 1793-1798.

who swayed India during nine years, and had to fight the Gurkha and the third Mahratta wars. As Hastings left the map of British India it remained practically unchanged until the days of Dalhousie; but in this long interval occur the names, all more or less memorable, of Amherst, Bentinck, Metcalfe, and Auckland. With the latter recommenced an era of wars lasting over twenty years. Ellenborough succeeded Auckland, and the viceregal seat was then ascended by the soldier-Governor Lord Hardinge, who had lost a hand at the battle of Ligny. Under him, in 1845, Sir Hugh Gough valorously defeated the Sikhs. Hardinge had for successor that epoch-

From a painting] [*at Apsley House.*

RICHARD, SECOND EARL OF MORNINGTON, AFTERWARDS MARQUESS OF WELLESLEY.
Governor-General, 1797-1805.

From a portrait by] [*Chinnery.*

GILBERT ELLIOT, FIRST EARL OF MINTO.
Governor-General, 1807-1812.

making and masterful ruler, Lord Dalhousie, whose eight years of government marked the close of an era. His vast and energetic administrative achievements and earnest reforms have been too much forgotten in the storms raised by his annexations, for the self-willed Scotchman added to the Empire the Punjab, Oude, and many smaller appanages; albeit after him was to come the deluge of the Great Mutiny.

It is at this point that my own humble personal recollections of this notable dynasty of Indian Governor-Generals and Viceroys begin. I went to India in 1857 in the service of the East India Company—being transferred to Her Majesty, along with

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From a portrait by] [*Sir Thomas Lawrence.*

GEORGE CANNING.
Governor-General of India, 1822.

India, in 1859—and have had the honour to be acquainted with every single Governor-General and Viceroy from Lord Canning, who mounted the vacant throne of Dalhousie, down to the accomplished and high-minded young nobleman who now sits upon it. With some among them, notably Lord Lawrence, Lord Northbrook, the Marquess of Ripon, and Lord Dufferin, I have been privileged to enjoy friendship, which must not, however, prevent me from saying that I think India has been more righteously and conscientiously governed since than before the great catastrophe. To complete my hasty list of the uncrowned kings in this long chronicle of Indian governing men, the Viceroys—for that is their new title—there have followed in the order I shall recite :—Lord Canning, the Earl of Elgin, Sir John afterwards Lord Lawrence, Lord Mayo, Lord Northbrook, Lord Lytton, the Marquess of Ripon, the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Elgin (second son of the name), and Lord Curzon.

From a portrait by] [*Lourdes Dickinson.*

GEORGE, FIRST EARL OF AUCKLAND.
Governor-General of India, 1835-1842.

From a portrait by] [*Eddis.*

LORD HARDINGE.
Governor-General, 1844-1848.

Let us try to realise what that India is which these twenty-five more or less notable and capable rulers have bequeathed to the present tenant of the golden chair of Tippu.

It is not a country, but a continent. From the little patch of land humbly bought by Job Charnock from the Subhadar of Bengal, then called Kalighat, now the huge city of Calcutta, our possessions have grown

to a prodigious empire embracing fourteen large provinces under direct British rule, with about one hundred and fifty feudatory states and sub-kingdoms, which all, however, acknowledge and obey the British Crown. This vast area, as big as all Europe minus Russia, contains at least two hundred and sixty millions of inhabitants, more than double Gibbon's estimate of the muster roll of races and nations governed by Imperial Rome.

Within its confines there are to be heard spoken more than one hundred and thirty languages and dialects. There exist all climates in the enormous peninsula, from the ice-slopes of Himalaya to the burning plains of the Gangetic Delta and at the South, while the tribes and sub-tribes of the land are positively almost countless. Those broadly called Hindus preponderate and form seventy-three per cent. of the population, the Mohammedans are about twenty-one per cent. It is, however, necessary to remember that most of these latter are low-caste Hindus by blood. There do not survive in India more than a quarter of a million of the true old conquering Mogul race. Of this immense mass of people the Indian Government rules directly about two hundred millions, and Native administrations control the balance of the fifty or sixty millions.

But it must be understood that the strong hand of the Sircar stretches into every court, little or large, and is active and omnipotent over all, from Quetta to Comorin and Bombay to Mandalay. Many of the Indian princes maintain, indeed, a royal state more magnificent than that of most European capitals. They have splendid palaces, sumptuous retinues, armies of no mean force superbly equipped, large revenues, public and personal, and they exercise a real, substantial power within certain clear limits. But in the proudest, as in the humblest chief city of all these Native States, there always dwells a quiet, unobtrusive English gentleman, generally a civilian. He is called the Resident, and is the living embodiment of the might and majesty of the Viceroy himself, distant at Simla or Barrackpore. While all is well and orderly, the Resident's touch is no more felt in the Native State's affairs than that of the lotus petal gliding on the face of the river. When matters go wrong, when there is *zulum* (tyranny) or misgovernment, he becomes the *anicut*, the rock-faced barrier, that checks the fiercest stream and, if needful, diverts its course or changes its channel.

From a portrait by] [*George Richmond.*

THE MARQUESS OF DALHOUSIE.
Governor-General of India, 1848-1855.

For the most part these Native courts work now in a steady and excellent harmony

From a portrait by] [*G. Richmond.*

VISCOUNT CANNING.
First "Viceroy" of India, 1855-1861.

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with the central Râj. Absolutely secure in their inherited rights while they rule their people well and justly, the maharajahs of India, among whom are some enlightened and large-minded princes, came more and more to gather heartily and loyally around the almost worshipped personality of the late Queen as Kaisar-i-Hind, and form to-day a friendly and wealthy reserve to the strength of the Empire, which would certainly show itself at an hour of Imperial need faithful and formidable.

Well, then, over all this vast region of humanity, that plain figure in the "grey hat" whom we watched landing in Bombay, has, like his many and various predecessors, to be an earthly Providence. From the hour he lands upon them, to that when he quits the shining shores of India, the full and ceaseless current of her fates and fortunes must flow daily through his heart and mind. The least energetic Viceroy learns during his Indian sojourn to work like a convict. Those most enthusiastic and absorbed in the overwhelming task are apt to kill themselves, like Cornwallis and Dalhousie. For material strength to sustain their decrees, they have the splendid Army of India, seventy thousand of it picked white troops, with another mass of one hundred and fifty thousand Sepoys and Sowars, the fighting flower of a land which has bred the Rajput, the Mahratta, the Sikh, and the Gurkha. For administrative purposes they command in the admirable Civil Service of the Presidencies the finest body of governing men ever imperially trained.

Not even Rome at the best of her conquering and colonising history produced agents so able, so devoted, and so incorruptible as these most worthy and hard-working successors of Clive and Hastings. Side by side with their educated body, which furnishes collectors, judges, residents, and such-like high officers to every district and every form of duty, is the almost equally meritorious Uncovenanted Civil Service, into the ranks of which the Natives themselves largely enter. Such, roughly, with ample police and provincial staffs, is the machinery of the Government which each new Viceroy finds working smoothly and ready to his hand.

For months, sometimes for years, it will run without those heated bearings which we call "events." Then are the halcyon days of the high office, and to be Viceroy then is to be lord of the best and richest scenes and chapters of the "Arabian Nights," to enjoy the glory and gladness of royalty without its dangers and troubles, to sit on the very highest pinnacle of human greatness which a commoner can attain, in the sunniest weather that can shine upon mortal head.

The salary of a Viceroy, nominally twenty-five thousand pounds sterling per annum, but larger than this by privileges and allowances, permits the King's representative to uphold a becoming state. He is surrounded by men of vast experience, and has advice tendered to him and Bills proposed by the Legislative Council; but nowadays the final authority is not at Chouringhi or Simla, but in the office of the Secretary of State for India, and with the Parliament at Westminster, which limits the power of Viceroys both for good and evil.

But India is an ocean of which some portion or other must always be having its storm. "Events" are sure to arrive. A war breaks out on the frontier; a popular tumult occurs in a city; the eternal feud between Hindu and Mohammedan arises over a dead cow or a pig; somewhere abroad England has suddenly to call for Indian soldiers; or cholera or plague stalks through the land, working sad havoc with the patient cultivators; or, worst or direst of all, the monsoon fails, and the Viceroy—to the ruin of his own peace and the confusion of his Chancellor's next Budget—has to face the only enemy whom he really fears, the awful famine. For those quiet gentlemen in the "grey hats" representing the English Crown have, ever since the time of Lord Canning, done what Timur and Aurangzeb, what Shah Jehan and Akhbar, what Sivaji and Tippu never for a moment dared to do. They have taken on themselves the task of saving life when the gods are angry in India. They spend millions and millions to keep alive the peasant and his household where the best and most powerful rulers of old folded their impotent arms and waited till Indra or Allah was pleased to send the rain.

The daily existence of these potentates is almost necessarily magnificent beyond our western standards. India in her public life likes colour and expects it, and a Viceroy, were he simple in taste and habits as John Lawrence, or as undemonstrative by nature and preference as the Marquess of Ripon, must be a *Pukkah Lat Saheb*—a great and dazzling personage. There is nothing elsewhere, I really believe, to match what Lord Beaconsfield would have called "the sustained splendour of their stately lives."

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Even in Calcutta or Simla it is, day after day, all guards of honour and gorgeous display; and when these important beings pass into their vast outside Provinces, or march through Native States to hold durbars and receive obsequious kings and princes, it is a town of silk and linen rather than a camp which they pitch at each stage of the viceregal progress.

Moi qui vous parle—this humble writer who addresses you, when dwelling for a short time in Government House, Calcutta, used to smile with something between pride and embarrassment to find himself going out shopping in a carriage and four with mounted cavalry soldiers on either side. Not but what the Viceroys themselves love plainness and quiet when they can enjoy those blessings. I have had the honour of smoking many a briarwood pipe of tobacco at Lord Lawrence's side while he helped me write the story of the deeds and policies of the Dalhousie Administration; and more than once have I seen Lord Dufferin patiently learning Persian in his garden, his turbaned *munshi* trotting by his side down the avenue of palm and bamboo, and in the kindly hand which governed India, "Robinson Crusoe" done into the classic language of Sadi. For myself, I must confess nothing could ever strip a Viceroy of a certain special lustre and import in those eyes which were early filled, and must ever remain filled, with the vast visions and marvellous meanings of India.

Look at what Lord Curzon has had to grapple with since his period of Indian office began. On the heels of the cruel pestilence which had decimated some of the fairest regions of the land came the worst famine known since ancient times, and with a hundred other heavy cares upon his brow, the young Viceroy has had daily to feed with public rice more than five million mouths, and to deal with sixty millions of stricken and pinched people.

There is nothing like the British administration of the King's Eastern Empire to be witnessed elsewhere. The more travellers who see India, and the more of India they see, the better will be their comprehension and the deeper their interest in the solid and arduous work which has been done and which is being done to-day under the unfailing line of Anglo-Saxon ruling men, the Indian Viceroys. There, while making the most pleasant of holidays and viewing the most interesting of all scenes, they will oftentimes travel a score or two of leagues without encountering the white face of one Sahib; and yet they will find and know the King's peace kept, and the King's justice present and puissant at the door of every hut and across the shadow of every jungle in the vast and marvellous land.

Lady Curzon. Lord Curzon.

OUR PRESENT VICEROY, LORD CURZON, AND A GROUP AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE, LUCKNOW.

From a photograph supplied by Miss L. De Gruyther, Lucknow.

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"NO TIME FOR READING."

By ANDREW LANG.*

"HE who runs *may* read," but at the English Universities "a running man" is not often a reading one. Still, we rejoice in two running men, my contemporaries, who have reached the winning-post of legal and political success (one of them has attained the woolsack), and there is no real reason why he who runs should not read. The complaint of "no time for reading" is common, almost universal, in both sexes. In an article "Dedicated at the Young" (like the famous Anglo-Portuguese Grammar), I would take up my parable against this so-called "want of time," the despair of publishers. "Why should we publish books," they ask plaintively, "if nobody will read them?" And authors are also sufferers.

Pause, O youth or maiden! before you accustom your lips to this fatal formula: "I have no time to read." You have all the time which, for you, exists, and it is abundant. What are you doing with it—with your leisure? Mainly gossiping. Our modern malady is gregariousness. We *must* be in company, chattering. Observe and take warning by the dog. He is so much the friend of man that, if shut up from human society, he often neglects his natural way of passing his time (scratching himself), and utters discontented howls, disturbing the vicinity. Human beings, for the moment destitute of company, do not howl, indeed, but they do not read—they avoid the instructing and amusing society of books. To be always with others, always gregarious, always chattering, like monkeys in tree-tops, is our ruling vice, and *this* is the reason why we have no time to read, and why you see so many people pass their leisure, when alone, in whistling, or whittling. They have time to whittle.

Another reason is afforded by newspapers. People who "have no time to read" books, read newspapers unceasingly. This does appear to me to become, in many cases, a morbid appetite. The newspaper, says Crabbe, that neglected poet, is—

> To all men something, and to some men all.

That was a century ago, when perhaps the rural newspaper came out only once a week. Yet some persons, even then, read nothing else. Nowadays we mark middle-aged men of leisure who pass their mornings, from breakfast to luncheon, in steadily working through every column and paragraph of the morning papers. Then they go to their club and read all the evening papers till they fall asleep. At dinner they repeat to each other what they have read—such is their idea of conversation. The "newspaper habit" is a disease. What pleasure or profit people obtain by cramming their minds with futile details, frequently contradicted next day, a reader of books cannot imagine.

This is no new malady of the spirit of man. The Athenians of old possessed an ample and excellent literature. When St. Paul visited their town, the citizens (slave-owners, having all the day to themselves, untrammelled by business or labour) might have read Homer, the dramatists, the philosophers, the lyric poets, Xenophon, Plato, the now lost works of Sappho, and many other books of merit. But they took pleasure "in nothing but hearing or telling some new thing," which was precisely equivalent to our reading the newspapers and gossiping about what we read. Athens was only saved from intellectual perdition by having no printing-press and therefore no newspapers.

We are become, in this matter, very like the Athenians, but worse. Asked if he has read a book, a man usually says: "No, I have no time for books, but I have read a review of it in the *Literary Rajbag*." Now, what *is* a review in the *Literary Ragbag?* It is not a criticism. It contains a photograph of the author, a description of his "early struggles," an estimate of his income, an account of his home, wife, dogs, and cats, and a comment on his favourite amusements. Why has everyone time to read all these futilities about the writers of books, while not one person in a thousand has time to read the books of the writers? I, who pen these remonstrances, and you, who run your eye over them, are alike sinners—both are wasting time which might be spent in reading old, good literature. But I am the less guilty, being storm-stayed in a lawyer's office in a little empty Border town, with

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nothing to occupy the intellect but the newspaper (nor have I sunk to reading that), the "Prisons (Scotland) Acts," and "The Public General Acts passed in the 62nd and 63rd years of the Reign of Queen Victoria." Outside is the broad, wet, rain-swept marketplace, absolutely empty except for three wagons, the town pump, and the statue of Sir Walter Scott. There is not in view a human being, not even a dog or a cat. In such circumstances to indite an article on economy of time is hardly a sin, but he who reads it might be reading Dante, or Shakespeare, or Plato, or Mr. William James, or any other philosopher or poet.

If my remarks carry any moral weight, the student will at once throw down my trivial page, rush to his own, or his father's, or the public library, and begin, say, upon Lord Clarendon's "History of the Great Rebellion," or Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason," or Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy," or, by way of something light, Lord Bacon's "*Novum Organum*" — a bracing work — or the "Logic" of Mr. John Stuart Mill, containing an essay on cadaveric rigidity.

Seriously, no more time is needed to read masterpieces than to read the last new novel. It is not time, but "the mind to it" that is lacking. Do not dawdle and put off, but begin upon something good at once. I may freely admit that the study of Bacon and Mill requires seclusion and earnest application; but many good books—say, Boswell's "Life of Johnson," or the Doctor's own "Lives of the Poets"—are at least as easy reading as a new novel, and much more diverting than most new novels. You make acquaintance with such wits and charming characters as you do not, unless you are very fortunate, meet every day.

Such books are excellent company in bed, before falling asleep, or after waking. The youth or maiden who "has no time for reading" might do worse than try a course of the bedside books that Thackeray liked. A few morning and evening hours will prove whether you have a taste for real literature; whether it amuses you to be present in the spirit with Dr. Johnson, Goldsmith, Burke, Mrs. Thrale, Miss Burney; with Juliet, and Imogen, and Rosalind — or whether it is not time, but taste and interest, that you congenitally lack.

Photo by] [Elliott & Fry.

MR. ANDREW LANG.

Given these, given the love for the good society that lives in literature, you will soon discover ways of emancipating yourself from society which is not so excellent. Some men have risen at five to read and write—like Scott when his whole day was passed under the public eye, in law courts, in society, in country houses. Others, like Macaulay, have managed to read in the streets, automatically steering themselves safely to the wonder of mankind. This plan I cannot personally recommend; for the last time that I tried it, I encountered a lamp-post, which knocked in my hat and to a certain extent, which may be variously estimated by critics, damaged my head. Wolf's plan of reading at night with his feet in a tub of cold water to keep him awake, was heroic, but is not for general imitation. In fact, I can give no "wrinkles" as to economising time for the purposes of reading, because

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opportunities must vary with the conditions of each individual.

Only this is certain—that the most busy people, like the late Bishop of London, always contrive to have time for everything. Everybody spontaneously finds time for what his heart is in, for what he really enjoys. On the other hand, I have known young ladies with entire leisure who felt obliged to bind themselves by solemn pledges that they would read for half an hour every day. One observed them snatching at periods of five minutes, carefully timed, and so they tried to work up to the half-hour. And what were they doing all the rest of the waking hours? They were chattering, dressing, shopping, and chattering again; always in company, never alone.

A person who, from taste or sense of duty, desires to read must either dare to be alone occasionally, or must learn to distract his attention and to read while others "chatter trifles." Now, to avoid the unceasing presence of other people, or to read in their company, does certainly make a boy or girl unpopular. Most people, to be frank, simply detest reading, and hate to see another person read. They think him an unamiable boor and bookworm. My own youth was one long martyrdom—excessively unpopular I was, to be sure, because I preferred books to the company of garrulous but uninteresting persons. My aversion to bores, my preference for books, may have been a glaring moral defect; I rather fancy that it was truly wicked. Certainly it was highly unpopular; but Nature made me careless of what a vain people thought (and very frankly said) as long as I could keep out of their way, perhaps up a tree, with a book.

I have heard of two beautiful little girls, one of whose parents did not wish them ever to read. They used to lie on the floor of their darkened bedroom in the early morning, golden head by golden head, and read by the light that came through the chink between the door and the floor. Can we recommend these examples to youth? I really am at a loss as to the moral problem. Is it not selfish and wicked to find time for reading when you thereby make everyone round you angry and uncomfortable? To see a child with a book seriously annoys many parents and other kinsfolk. Must it not, therefore, be wrong to make time for reading, for a selfish enjoyment which mysteriously exasperates the grown-up neighbours?

It is a question of conscience. My conscience gives no clear answer, beyond assuring me that, if it were all to do over again, I would be as confirmed a reader as ever. Young people must fight their own battle as good-humouredly as possible. Some measure of offence they cannot but give, if they like bookish company, unless they belong to bookish families and dwell within their courts.

As for adults who "have no time to read," their first economy must be in newspapers. They may begin by cutting down their consumption of the daily papers. But I have very little hope of adults, and none of many ladies in society, except the little flock who must and will read. The habit of finding time must be acquired in youth, will be acquired naturally by all who have the taste for good books, and will not be acquired by the rest of the generation.

Among people who, with exceptions, never read books, one remarks novelists, Scotch professors, schoolmasters, booksellers, publishers, schoolmistresses, college tutors, actors, stockbrokers, men in commerce, reviewers, and hunting-men. Among people who do read are judges, the female members of the British peerage, gamekeepers, gillies, omnibus-drivers, shepherds, some lawyers in both branches of the profession, some schoolboys and undergraduates, soldiers, two golfers, and most Civil servants, who, in this country, are almost always poets. These are British statistics, but do not include Ireland and Wales, of which I have little personal knowledge. I wish I could add that the reading classes *buy* books, but they mostly borrow from the circulating library.

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BOXING HORSES.

By H. J. Holmes.

THE high school of equestrian training has achieved many triumphs during the past decade or two, but it is questionable whether anything more remarkable has happened than the success which attended the recent efforts of Mr. A. B. Powell, the well-known veteran tutor of the noblest of our four-footed friends. This gentleman has actually taught a pair of beautiful horses the noble art of self-defence, an art in which the intelligent animals appear to take the greatest pleasure. With gloved fore-feet, the two accomplished creatures now give a couple of performances daily in the circus which for so many years has borne the name of their trainer.

ENTERING THE RING, THE PAIR OF EQUINE PUGILISTS SHAKE "HANDS."

What Mr. Powell does not know about horses is not worth knowing. He was born amidst circus life, and has been brought up amongst the animals to the training and education of which his life has been devoted almost as long as he can remember. As a daring circus-rider he became famous years ago, and as such he has bitten the sawdust many times; bare-back riding of ultra-sensational character is not exactly the kind of life conducive to soundness of limb and smoothness of feature. Mr. Powell bears the hall-marks, in the shape of healed injuries to head and limbs, of a long career in the ring. Now he devotes his time to the management of the huge organisation known all over the United Kingdom and the Continent as Powell's Travelling Circus; and in the intervals, when a little leisure comes his way, he is always to be found carefully and masterfully coaching some beautiful, glossy-hided creature into the arts and mysteries of public performances of various descriptions which delight the lover of the horse—and where does not such a lover exist?

With such a lengthy experience of training horses, there was no man more likely to succeed in what he tells me was the most difficult task he has ever attempted—that is, the proper tuition of a pair of young and spirited horses in the art of boxing. With a patience such as only a trainer of animals possesses, he kept on at the work, never once fearing defeat. He knew it was possible to succeed—and in the end he succeeded. Every day for two years he regularly tutored the two animals. Many and many a time he was almost in despair, but his faith in the efficacy of training held him steadfast in his purpose.

"CIGARETTE" GETS HIS GLOVES ON.

The two pugilistic horses are both of foreign breed. One is a dun, the other a jet black. They are perfect pictures to look at. The dun hails from Malta. Mr. Powell bought the black in Tunis some

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years ago. Although a magnificent animal, the latter had a fiery temper, and for a whole year, during which time he accompanied the

"CHARLEY" AND "CIGARETTE" INDULGE IN A LITTLE PRELIMINARY SPARRING.

circus in its travels over the Continent, nothing could be done with him. "Cigarette," as he was christened, is a thoroughbred Arab, whilst his fighting friend "Charley," the dun, is of Turkish breed. The Arab is now as gentle and docile as a little child, and follows Mr. Powell about as a lamb follows its ewe. Master "Charley," on the contrary, is sly and not to be trusted. It appears that before he was selected by his owner as an exponent of the manly art, he was used for ring tricks; his character in consequence degenerated: he became roguish and disposed towards flippancy in the presence of the public. Mr. Powell finds it is necessary to keep a sharp eye on him.

Are horses jealous? This would prove a nice subject for discussion at a friendly meeting of trainers. In the case of "Charley" and "Cigarette," Mr. Powell assures me there almost seems to be an instance of a display, on both sides, of the feelings which the green-eyed monster is reputed to inspire in the bosom of the higher animal. The incident illustrative of this view is worth describing, because it was the outcome of it that led Mr. Powell to believe that he had found at last his long-looked-for boxing horses.

In the earlier days of "Charley's" connection with circus life, he was presented with a very handsome saddle for use in a certain act. Now, it happened on one occasion that it was found necessary to remove this saddle from the back of the Turkish-bred animal and place it upon the jet black "Cigarette." This was done in the view of the outraged dun, which at the time displayed a specimen of his bad temper.

Later on in the evening a tremendous row was heard in the neighbourhood of the stalls where the two animals had been stabled side by side. Some of the attendants ran to see what was up. They found that "Cigarette" and "Charley" had broken loose and were practically "in grips"—kicking, plunging, and stamping upon each other!

When Mr. Powell arrived on the scene, the two animals were standing on their hind-legs in the regular pugilistic attitude, and endeavouring to exchange terrific blows on head and body. They were quickly separated,

SETTING TO IN REAL EARNEST.

but the astute trainer had taken his cue, and next day he began to give the horses their first real lessons in boxing. Since then

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"Cigarette" and "Charley" have become very good friends, in spite of the fact that they have a couple of friendly bouts every day "with the gloves on."

In teaching the two horses to box, Mr. Powell adhered to the principles on which he trains every animal that passes through his hands—*viz.*, much patience, mingled with kindness and gentle persuasion. He is proud of the fact that in all his experience he has never found it necessary to be cruel.

In this particular instance, although the course of training was long and laborious, he was not called upon to use the whip as a stimulating influence or as a corrector of faults. When it did happen that the whip had to be used, the lash was laid on but lightly; for so sensitive are highly bred animals, that the slightest touch is sufficient to prevent any refractory conduct.

The first difficulty was to make the horses accustomed to wearing, and the use of, the gloves. This was eventually overcome, and now the creatures actually hold out their "hands" for the gloves to be put on. Yet it was not until two years from the date of the first lesson that Mr. Powell felt justified in making his boxing horses part of the afternoon or evening performance.

The clever trainer considers himself for-

A WELL-PARRIED LEFT-"HANDER."

tunate in succeeding even after so long and tedious a tuition.

"A man might have two hundred horses, try them all, and fail to find two out of that number capable of being trained for such a performance," he said to me.

One of the trials of a trainer is that some days a horse will do anything that is required

A FOUL!

of him; on other days he will do nothing, and upsets every calculation regarding his progress.

"Cigarette" and "Charley" made their *début* as equine pugilists before a London audience at the Royal Aquarium a little while since, and were a great success—in fact, they were the "star" item on the programme; and that, too, although the whole strength of Powell's Circus was augmenting the Westminster house of popular entertainment.

Only those who saw the boxing horses during the engagement there know how well Mr. Powell has done his work. From entrance to exit the conduct of "Cigarette" and "Charley" was pugilistically correct; they never strove to hit below the belt or indulge in any of those fancy but unsportsmanlike tricks that so many of the professional fighting fraternity indulge in when they get a chance of doing so.

Entering the ring accompanied by their seconds, the two opponents shake "hands" heartily and immediately proceed to business, umpired by their trainer. Assuming the recognised attitude of pugilists, they spar scientifically, getting a blow home now and then with telling effect. It may be said at once that the gloves are so well padded that a really hard knock is never administered to either of the combatants; the animals

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seem quite to enjoy their bouts. The "rounds" are arranged in such a way that the horses are not fatigued by maintaining an upright pose for a too prolonged period.

"CIGARETTE" FEELS TIRED.

An amusing part of the performance is that at the end of every "round" the principals retire *pro tem.* to their respective corners, where the seconds, prepared for every emergency, are ready to help the combatants to a speedy recovery of breath. "Cigarette's" muzzle is duly sponged, or the towel is flapped in "Charley's" face by the energetic seconds. At the referee's signal, the boxers spring once more to their "feet" and, advancing to the centre of the ring, another "round" is set merrily going.

The completeness of Mr. Powell's training is observable towards the close of the contest, when the pair of pugilists pretend to be rather "groggy on their pins" and wobble a good bit, striking with lessened fury and generally behaving like rather exhausted heroes indeed.

Finally, "a knock-out blow" is administered by "Charley," and "Cigarette" falls flat in the sawdust, only to rise again after the referee has pronounced that "Charley" is the victor. The winner, of course, receives the plaudits of the assembled multitude, bowing gracefully in acknowledgment as he retires; whilst the poor vanquished "Cigarette" limps slowly away, assisted out of the ring by his indefatigable second, who has "thrown up the sponge."

"KNOCKED OUT."

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A DOUBLE MISFIT.

By E. F. BENSON.*

MAISIE JEDBURGH poked her bedroom fire with the care of a finished voluptuary and drew two low chairs close to it.

"Now we'll have a nice long talk, Millie," she said. "It's only a little after six, and dinner isn't till eight, and as you've brought your maid, you needn't go to dress till half-past seven at the earliest. How funny I shall find it to have a maid! Does she sponge your face and wash your hands? and aren't you dreadfully afraid of her?"

Lady Mildred drew her chair closer to the fire, for the night was cold, and took off her *pince-nez*. She was expensively but rather shabbily dressed—that is to say, her clothes had once been admirable.

"Yes, dreadfully," she said; "but I always was frightened of servants. It will be quite different with you, Maisie. In ten days you will put your nose in the air—it always is *rather* in the air, dear—and be quite unconscious of them, as if you had been born and bred to it. I have always said that it was your *métier* to make other people stand in subordinate positions."

"Oh! that's nonsense!" said Maisie very decidedly. "But do you really think that I shan't be frightened long of major-domos and maximus-domos, and being a bride, and powdered footmen?"

"I'm sure you won't. Oh! how odd the world is! Here am I having always been used to that sort of thing, and never having got used to it or liking it, while you, on the other hand, have always lived so quietly in this dear old Cambridge; whereas, whereas——"

"Whereas what?" asked Maisie.

"Whereas—well, it sounds snobbish of me to say it, but I assure you I am not a snob—what I mean is this." Lady Mildred paused and looked at the fire with half-shut eyes, in the manner of short-sighted people. "It is just this, Maisie, and it's a good example of the way in which classes mix themselves up, and prove, without any screaming democracy, that there are no such things. Here am I, Agincourta, as you always used to call me, with whole rows of earls and such folk behind me, and really I belong to quite a different class of people. I feel hopelessly out of it at home. Oh, good gracious! how bored I get with the parties we have, and the parties I go to! The men who shoot all day, and the girls who run after the men; and then in the evening cards or dancing, but always flirting! I couldn't flirt, you know, dear. I simply couldn't, so it's lucky nobody wants to flirt with me. But girls of my own age and in our set in the main think about nothing else; they are really like barmaids."

Maisie burst out laughing.

"Oh, Millie! you are getting seriouser and seriouser!" she cried.

"I think I am. But then, when I came up to Girton, I was completely at home and completely happy. I had so many friends there among girls who had to earn their own living, or who really wanted to be educated, and thought about other things than marrying a rich man. There are so many delightful things in the world besides rich men, you know. I couldn't imagine marrying any of the young men whom I see at home, and they equally can't imagine asking me to. They shoot well, or they are athletic or handsome, and have money, but, but——"

Maisie laughed.

"I'm sure from your point of view that describes Percy exactly," she said. "He is all that. Now answer me truly, because you do know him. Don't you think he is just handsome and rich and athletic, and nothing else whatever? Perhaps you don't even think him handsome. You see, I love him so much, I don't care what anybody else thinks, not even what you think, dear Agincourta."

Lady Mildred shuffled her large feet on the fender and brought down a sounding cataract of fire-irons.

"Dear me! I am so sorry," she murmured, dropping them again severally. "Perhaps they would be better lying down. Well, Maisie, I will be quite frank. I am sure Percy is an excellent man, but—I am

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wrong, no doubt—I could myself no more look forward to spending my life with him than——"

"Than I could with a Cambridge professor," put in Maisie.

"'Do you really think I shan't be frightened long?'"

Lady Mildred gave this interpolation a moment's consideration. In the lightest conversation even she never assented to anything she did not agree with.

"Yes, just that," she said.

"Dear Agincourta!" cried Maisie, with effusive pity. "I know. We seem inexplicable to each other," she said, "and that is one of the reasons why we get on so well. Let's see. Oh, yes! my class—that is an odious expression, but what is one to say? my class seems to me, as a whole, without interests, and therefore uninteresting."

"You wrong them," said Lady Mildred; "they are charming! You have proved you think so by your engagement to Percy

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Royston. But I, if I could choose my fate, would choose to have been born like you, in what people call the professional class, because by nature I belong to it. Then it would have been natural that I should come up to Girton; instead, I had a regular battle about it. It really was a great blow to my mother—not so much that I should go, but that I should want to. It would have been natural, too, that I should have taken up education as a profession; perhaps I might even have got a lectureship here. And then perhaps——"

"Then perhaps," put in Maisie, "you would have married a Don. Oh, my! And you would never have spent summers in London, and autumns in your country house, and winters in the counties, and springs on the Riviera, and then London again. I'm going to do all those things, and oh! how I shall love it! I shall hunt and take lunch to the shooters, and play bridge, and dance, and flirt; yes, flirt, darling—dear Agincourta, I only said that to make you look like one of your ancestors—and sing, and laugh, and talk, and never go to sleep because it's such waste of time, and have Percy always with me, and read *all* the improper novels. There!"

Lady Mildred laughed, showing very white teeth. She had no other passable feature, take them singly, but she was somehow charming to look at. Her hands, it is true, were beautiful, long and finely fingered; but hands do not count. And she seldom laughed.

"Not that I am not fond of Cambridge," continued Maisie; "but then, you see, I am fond of everything. In a way I like these nice dull days and these nice old learned people here; they are like cows in a country landscape. And certainly I enjoyed Girton enormously. Don't think I am entirely frivolous, Agincourta."

"No?" asked Agincourta, with interest, but with no innuendo in her tone.

"No, dear. I went in for Greek art, as you know; I go in for it still. Those people are so extremely well made—oh, Agincourta! I just love making you look shocked—but they are. I spend hours in the Cast Museum, and if I were not talking to you, I should quite possibly be reading Overbeck. Oh, yes! Percy was in the class, too—don't be so sly, dear!—but quite apart from him. And when I go a-revolving in 'upper succles,' I shall continue to take in the *Hellenic Journal*. And the Professor is a great friend of mine; he's an old darling!"

"Professor who?" asked Mildred.

"Professor Rossington. Why?"

"Nothing. I know him well. He is charming, is he not?"

Maisie looked at her friend a moment with a glance that, developed, might have become what is known as a questioning glance. In her case it did not get so far.

"Yes, and he is always bringing me photographs of new discoveries," she went on, "and we talk over fifth century noses, and sometimes he gets so learned that I don't follow him exactly, but I always say: 'Ah, yes; ah, yes,' with the stress on the 'Ah.' Yes, he's an old darling, and I love him."

"Not very old," said Lady Mildred.

"Practically very old," said Maisie. "By the way, he is dining here to-night, and I think he sits on your other side. Anyhow, he must be thirty-five. Percy's only twenty-four, you know."

Lady Mildred looked fixedly at the fire a moment.

"Oh, Maisie! fancy you, with all these people about and living here, wanting to change!" she said. "Yes, Mr. Rossington always seems to me a really cultured man. He has nice manners, too; and then, of course, he is the authority on Greek sculpture. It will be delightful being next him."

"Oh! we're the greatest friends," said Maisie. "Good gracious! it's half-past seven, and I must fly. There are all the cards to put in people's places. When I'm married, I shall always have a man to tell people where they sit, just inside the dining-room door, don't you know? It saves so much trouble. You know your room, dear, next mine; and have you got everything?"

"Scott will have unpacked," said Lady Mildred, and in her voice was a kind of grave disdain.

Dr. Jedburgh, Maisie's father, was Master of one of the smaller Cambridge colleges, and industry and bland imperturbability were by a long way his most leading characteristics. They had, in fact, so far distanced the other qualities which usually go to make up a man that they were quite out of sight of the rest. Rather more than twenty years ago, in a moment of strange recklessness, he had proposed to the daughter of one of the secretaries of the French Embassy in London, and had been accepted. But his wife, who had ever been an enigma to him, died in little more than a year, surviving, however, in Maisie, who was explicable as the daughter of her father only on the ground of her also being the

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daughter of her mother. Since she had reached efficient years, she had been mistress of her father's house, managing him and the servants alike with the gaiety of her mother's race, combined with the practical powers of the English-born. She had the true French passion for perfection in detail, and an imperative craving to be always in the state of having too much to do; and between the household duties, which included considerable hospitalities, intimacy with more friends than most can number acquaintances, and a fitful thirst for accurate and scholarly information—a heritage from her father—this craving was reasonably satisfied.

But her life had never seemed to her full till her engagement some few weeks ago, and not yet public, to Percy Royston, heir on his grandfather's death to a marquisate and a million. The young man was resplendently English and remarkably amiable, and the courtship had been one of those affairs which seem so truly conventional because they occur seldom in life, but with so unerring a frequency in fiction. The two had become acquainted when Percy was an undergraduate at the college of which Maisie's father was Master, had flirted disgracefully all through the last May week, had met with violent opposition from his relations, who had eventually compromised on seeing Maisie, before the engagement was made public. She accordingly had been to stay with his mother, and the whole and haughty clan of Roystons had looked at her at first with suspicion and dislike, then with thawing reserve, and finally with an approval as warm as their dislike had been icy. For Maisie, in her own manner, was irresistible; charm, lightness of touch, depth of affection, and extreme adaptability were hers, and the clan confessed itself conquered. Hence the engagement was to be immediately made public.

The party that night was of what Maisie called the menagerie order—that is to say, it was a judicious admixture of first authorities on various branches of obscure knowledge, and undergraduates of both sexes. Lady Mildred found herself between Maisie's father and Professor Rossington, and could have wished the dinner to last for ever, so congenial to her were both her neighbours. She was old friends with Mr. Rossington, and their talk circled seriously over matters of academic interest. The French excavations at Delphi greatly engaged them, nor less the charm of that land which both knew. Mr. Rossington was a man of singular but quiet impressiveness, handsome, and aged, except in years, with the dignity which habitual aloofness from the jostle and froth of life gradually confers on those who give their lives to study rather than enjoy or even observe the more human phenomena of existence. His speech was devoid of superfluity either in emotion or epithet, and it was the technicalities of art rather than its æsthetic effect which formed his life-long study. But to-night Lady Mildred noticed more than once in him a certain undefinable relish in matters more immediately mundane which was new to her. She was aware of a certain deficiency in herself in these regards, and when Mr. Rossington lent an almost eager ear to the description of a glowing moment in the afternoon's Rugby football match from one of the undergraduates who was talking eagerly to Maisie, she made a mental note that she must take more interest in unmomentous affairs. Maisie certainly was not devoid of it, for she was listening with a sparkling eye, and her voice broke in—

"It must have been too thrilling!" she said. "So he got in?"

"Rather! right behind; and Kennedy kicked it."

"I wish I had been there. I just love seeing a Rugby match. And I suppose to-day is the last. Oh, dear me! there are so many things I want to do, and I do so many of them."

Mr. Rossington looked up with a smile and caught Maisie's table-long glance.

"That is quite true, Miss Jedburgh," he said. "And even you are not content."

"Content? Never!" said Maisie with conviction. "Why, the moment I was content, I should die of not wanting to do anything."

There was a general laugh, for the speech was bitingly characteristic of her, and Dr. Jedburgh looked up placidly.

"What is Maisie saying?" he asked.

"It was only the cry of an aspiring soul," said she, rising. "Oh! Mr. Rossington, the cigarettes are on the chimney-piece; so if father forgets, which he usually does, help yourselves."

Maisie always insisted on playing some sort of game after dinner, often little adapted to the powers of the more elderly and sober of her guests. These games ranged the whole gamut between the utter but active frivolity of musical chairs, and the head-splitting laboriousness of "words out of words," and it was a constant surprise to her

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"'Impossible? That is a big word.'"

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to find how utterly at sea were learned men at them all. Whether nimbleness at capturing the remaining seat, a moderate memory for notable people whose names begin with C, acute cross-questioning in clumps, or imagination in dumb-crambo were required, it was always the most advanced scholars who showed the completest incompetence. And this was not want of effort, for mountains were in labour, and Mr. Rossington lashed his laggard intellect to the verge of insanity without perceiving that "b" turned rain into brain. More than once Maisie had taken him to task for this.

"You don't take it seriously," she said once, with less than her usual insight; "and if you can't take games seriously, you can take nothing seriously."

"But I do take it seriously," replied the agonised archæologist. "I think I may even take it too seriously. I simply can't see these things."

Maisie's natural intuition returned to her. "Then you are wanting in adaptability," she said.

That night after Maisie had left her, Lady Mildred dismissed her maid and sat down to think. She was confronted with a human problem, and she had but little skill in such. Also the problem was rendered more intricate by the presence of a personal factor which was new to her. The attraction which Maisie had for Mr. Rossington was evident, equally evident was Maisie's utter unconsciousness of it. To her he was, as she had said, "an old darling, and she loved him"; and no attitude, as Mildred felt sure, was so remote either from love or from consciousness of exciting it as that; in addition, she was engaged to and wholly occupied with Percy Royston. On the other hand, it required no more penetration to see how completely she filled the Professor's horizon. His eye followed her as a dog its master, and he had sat with a smile as absorbed as a child's to see her whisking round the dangerous corners in musical chairs—more than once he had left his place to be near her, and, when he had attained that, was conspicuous for having nothing to say and nothing apparently to do but twist his fingers into tight, ecstatic knots. He had turned over the leaves of her music when she had sung, upsetting a candle, and—almost more convincing than all—he had gleefully, at her request, engaged in cock-fighting with an undergraduate on the hearthrug. Through all the light comedy of the evening had wailed the low note of tragedy; Maisie, so Mildred felt certain, was dancing on his heart, utterly unconscious of that which lay beneath her heedless feet.

Lady Mildred drew her chair a little closer to the fire and played with the hand-screen which she held between the glow and her face. That was not all—indeed, that was far from all. For a long time she stood on the brink of letting that which was in her mind dip into conscious thought, for there would come to her, with that of a shame she knew to be unmerited, a blame of which she was guiltless, and, worst of all, a longing for and a desire for what she knew was inaccessible. All that she and Maisie had talked of before dinner was rehearsed once and again in her mind, and she slid nearer to conscious thought. At last she stood up.

"And I think only of him," she said softly to the twinkling fire, "and he thinks only of her, and she thinks of him not at all. How can I warn her? How can I?"

Nor was hers the only firelight vigil that night, for Mr. Rossington, having walked across the court to his rooms, sat down as usual to a spell of work. But Greek art was remote and shadow-like that night, and after two ineffectual struggles with his wandering thoughts, he shut up his books and turned for a few minutes to the fire before going to bed. But the minutes became many, and the fire was ash before he went.

The two girls were sitting in the morning-room next day, when the servant came in to say that Professor Rossington was in the drawing-room, and would like to speak to Miss Jedburgh a moment, if she were disengaged. Maisie, who was in the middle of a very long letter, got up a little impatiently, said "Oh, bother!" quite aloud, and left the room.

Mr. Rossington was standing in the centre of the drawing-room with a small roll of photographs in his hand.

"I thought you and Lady Mildred might like to see these," he said. "They are the new Delphi photographs, which I only received this morning."

"How kind of you!" said Maisie. "Mildred is in the other room. Won't you come in, and then we can look at them together?"

Mr. Rossington took them up from the table and put them jerkily down again. "Yes, that would be very pleasant," he said.

"Shall we go, then?" asked Maisie again, and as she spoke she looked at him, and her hands dropped by her side, and she stood there unable to speak, but longing to say

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anything, unable to move, but pining to be gone from the room, to run away.

"Yes, let us," said Mr. Rossington. "In a moment, in one moment. Maisie——"

Maisie looked up again and met in his eye appeal, hope, and a very patient, humble love.

"Oh, I am so sorry!" she cried. "No, no - don't say it!"

The hope flickered, the love remained.

"It is quite, quite impossible," she said. "And, indeed, I had no idea of—of what you thought of me, till a moment ago."

At that he stood erect a moment.

"Impossible? That is a big word. I would not make myself importunate, but——"

"I am already engaged," said Maisie. "Oh, Mr. Rossington! I am so sorry for this! I will not be stupid and banal, and talk about brothers and sisters, for that does no good. But, indeed, I like you very much."

Mr. Rossington looked very intently at a speck of mud on his sleeve and, as if by an after-thought, brushed it away.

"I will go away, I think," he said. "Ah! the photographs. Please show them to Lady Mildred."

He shook hands, went half way to the door, paused and turned on his heel, then, still with a sort of wandering aimlessness, like a tourist straying through an uninteresting gallery, went out.

Maisie lingered for a few moments, giving him time to get away. Uppermost in her mind and very predominant was frank sympathy and sorrow, below was a touch of impatience and a sense of dramatic interest. Then she hurried back to Agincourta.

"Oh, it is too awful!" she said. "I am so sorry about it all. Mr. Rossington——"

"I know, I know," said Mildred. "You needn't tell me, Maisie."

Maisie stared at her a moment.

"You knew? Oh, Mildred! why didn't you warn me? I had no idea of it."

"I couldn't—no, I couldn't," said Mildred. "Come, let us go out. We shall only get an hour at the Museum, as it is."

And she took off her *pince-nez* and furtively wiped the glasses on her handkerchief.

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THE KIT-BAG.

By RICHARD MARSH.*

WHENEVER I see a kit-bag, a curious feeling comes all over me.

I was in the Metropolitan Police Force over thirty years. I have now retired on a sergeant's pension. During the whole time I was a policeman I only once came into personal contact with anything very remarkable—I mean, out of the ordinary run of "drunks," assaults, felonies, burglaries, and that kind of thing. On that occasion a kit-bag played a pretty conspicuous part. So, to this hour, whenever I see one, I look at it out of the corner of my eye, as it were, and I ask myself a question.

I had then joined six years. I was attached to the Hampstead division. At that time I was on night duty. The particular night on which it happened was that of the sixth of September. A Tuesday it was. I am never likely to forget it. It was nasty weather. There had been a deal of wet during the day; and though when I left home it was not actually raining, there was a touch of fog about, and it was colder than one likes to have it at that time of the year, especially when one has to be out and about in it all night. I had had home worries. I left home, in consequence, a little later than I cared to do, for it was a good step from my place to the station-house. I was not sure my watch was quite right. Fearing that it might be later than I supposed, as I passed, I looked in at St. John's Wood railway station to compare their clock with mine. The last train must have just come in. They seemed to be on the point of closing the premises. The booking-office was empty, with the exception of one thing, a kit-bag. It stood against the wall close to the glass doors which led into the refreshment-room. To the best of my belief, that was the first time I had ever seen a thing of the kind—that is, to notice it. I fancy they must have been novelties in those days. And I've never seen a larger one than that was since. It looked brand new. I don't know how it was, but, as I said to my wife afterwards, directly I saw it I felt uncomfortable. I can't explain it; I am not trying to; but there the feeling was.

I left the bag still in sole possession of the booking-office and hurried off to the station-house, for, as it turned out, my watch was a trifle slow. I went out with the rest of the chaps who were on the night shift.

Part of my beat lay past a row of houses which was called Quarnley Terrace. Decent sized houses they were, standing back from the road. A strip of ground was in front of each, shut off from the public by a low stuccoed wall, surmounted by stuccoed pilasters. This was backed—at least, in most cases—by a tree or two, some shrubs, and that kind of thing, the whole forming an effectual screen.

My wife had been ill all day, and when I came away was worse. If I had not known that it would mean trouble, I should have stayed with her. Altogether, I was in a pretty state of mind; because, after all, though some people do not seem to think so, a policeman is a man. I had arranged with them at home that I should be at certain points at certain times. If anything happened, they were to bring me news at once. One of these points was the corner of Quarnley Terrace. I was hanging about there, all of a tremor of anxiety, when I saw, hurrying up Acacia Road, a girl. It was Lizzie, my wife's sister. In another half-minute she was at my side, all out of breath.

"It's all right—it's a boy," she said.

"A boy!" I gasped, for the news sort of caught me in the wind. "And how's Mary?"

"She's all right. They're both of them all right — doing famously. Couldn't be better, the doctor says. But I can't stop; I only ran out to let you know."

She did not stop—not longer than to exchange another dozen words. Presently she was scurrying back again, and I was marching along past Quarnley Terrace.

You feel queer the first time you are a father. I dare say when you have had a dozen or so, the addition of one or two more does not much matter. But the first time you know that a baby has just been born to you, it is different. At least, it was with me.

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You feel, all at once, that you have a new outlook on to the world. I know I did. What with thinking of the baby; and what I should call him; and whether I should make a policeman of him when his time came; and wondering how Mary was; and what she would say to me in the morning; and what I should say to her—I can tell you that I was in a nice sort of a fluster. My

"The booking-office was empty, with the exception of one thing, a kit-bag."

thoughts were not much occupied with the preservation of law and order. I dare say that I should have walked on and on, all through the night, thinking of Mary and the baby, and the baby and Mary, if, suddenly, I had not heard a sound.

It was only a little one, so slight a sound that the wonder was that, in my then mental state, I heard it at all. But I did; and, what was more, I recognised it, too. It was the click of a catch, a window-catch. It came from the house which I was passing. I glanced round. There, on the newly painted pillar, visible even in the darkness, was the number—20. In an instant I was through the gate and was flashing my bull's-eye on to the premises.

I had not been mistaken. There, on the sill of the bow window on the first floor, was a man.

"What are you doing there?" I asked, though the question was unnecessary, since it was plain enough what he was doing—he was trying to gain entrance into the house by means of the window. He had an open clasp-knife in his hand, with whose aid he had just shot back the catch of the window, which was the sound I had heard. Although I had probably taken him entirely by surprise, so far as I could see, he did not make the slightest attempt at concealment, nor did he seem to be in any way disconcerted. Indeed, he confronted me with what looked uncommonly like a smile.

He certainly did not present the type of figure which one generally associates with burglary. He was a very big man. Even in the crouching attitude which he necessarily assumed upon the window-sill, still I guessed him at over six feet. He seemed to be well dressed. At that time of night he wore a top-hat and kid gloves. He looked like a gentleman. I was presently to learn that he spoke like one.

"I'm burgling my own house," he answered.

"Burgling your own house? What do you mean? Do you live here?"

"I do. My name is Walter Parsons, and I am the occupier of these premises."

The name conveyed nothing to me. I had only been on the beat a week or two, and knew nothing of the inhabitants. I was ignorant of their names, their appearance, their occupations, everything. But the speaker could hardly be aware of that. For all he could tell, I might have the history of the locality at my finger ends, and a portrait of every one of its inhabitants in my mind's eye. He spoke with an easy assurance, which seemed to take it for granted that, as a prominent resident upon my beat, he must be a familar figure to me, and that I knew all about him. But, in spite of that—I have been laughed at for saying it before, because I had nothing to go on then; but I say it again—there was something about my gentleman up there on the window-sill which made me doubtful.

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"If you live there, why don't you go into your own house by the proper way—through the front door?"

"Because I can't. My wife and family are at Hastings. The place is supposed to be in charge of a caretaker, but it seems that her idea of caretaking does not include sleeping on the premises at night. I've been knocking and ringing for the last ten minutes."

"I didn't hear any knocking."

"Didn't you? Perhaps your attention was engaged elsewhere."

As a matter of fact, that had been the case. Still, as I had heard the click of the window-catch, it seemed to me that I ought to have heard the banging of a knocker, especially if he had been at it anything like as long as he said he had. I told him so. His reply was ironical.

"My good Mr. Constable, if you would like to try your hand at hammering, you can—till all's blue, and all the neighbourhood showers blessings on your head. Or if you wish to arrest me for entering my own house anyhow I like—down the chimney, if I choose—you may. In the meantime, I've got the window open." He pushed it up as he spoke. "I'm going in. I'll come and open the front door for you, and then I'll give you every possible proof that I'm merely an inoffensive householder who's been duped by a rascally caretaker."

He went in. I did not see how I could stop him, even if I had felt disposed to try, which I am not sure I was. A pretty figure I should have cut if I had attempted to use force to prevent him from entering his own house—as he put it himself—in any way he liked. One of my mates had had a wigging only a day or two before for what looked like over-anxiety to get up a case. I didn't want any of that sort of thing at my address. The man's manner was plausibility itself; for the matter of that, so was his tale. Caretakers do not always take care; and gentlemen do sometimes have to get into their own houses by the front window. I decided to give him a chance to do as he said—open the front door and show his right to behave as he had been doing. But if that front door were not open in double quick time, then—why, then there would be trouble.

In he got; down came the window—I had rather it had not—particularly as I distinctly heard him latch it. But there, again, I did not see how I could object to a man shutting his own front window. Then I waited—longer than I cared for—so long that I began to fidget. I started wondering what would happen if I really had been done. A nice sort of character I should have been made to look. I had come to the end of my patience, and was just about to begin a little assault and battery upon that door which would have roused the neighbourhood, when it opened. There stood my gentleman, with a light shining out into the hall from a room somewhere at the back.

"Sorry to keep you waiting, officer. I had to get a light. Couldn't introduce you to pitch darkness. Come in."

I hesitated. Our instructions were never to enter a private house when on duty except for what seemed very sufficient reasons. On the whole, I concluded that those reasons were present then. I entered. Shutting the door behind me, he led the way into a room behind—the room in which the light was. It seemed to be a sort of sitting-room, but it was in such a condition of disorder that it was not easy to tell. The furniture was covered with newspapers, and dust-cloths, and that kind of thing. So far appearances bore out his statement that the family was at the seaside. He offered a sort of apology.

"You see how things are. Nice place for a man to come home to, isn't it? This is what happens when one's household transfers itself to the sea."

"How come you not to have a key?" I asked.

"That's it. When I left Hastings this morning, I meant to return this evening; instead of which, I missed the train. So I wired to my wife and decided to come on here; when I got here, found the caretaker had taken French leave; and it was then, and only then, that I found I had come away without a key. As I didn't propose to be kept out of my own house, I tried the window. That caretaker is—a beauty."

"Some of them are not so reliable as they might be."

"This is one of them. Well, constable, I hope you're satisfied. Hallo! there's something here."

Going to the fireplace, he took a photograph off the mantel and handed it to me.

"There you are, my portrait—Walter Parsons, Esquire—at your service. I hope that's proof enough even for you."

It was his portrait, and an uncommonly good likeness, too. As he put it, it did seem proof enough.

"It seems all right. I'm sorry if I've

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"'What are you doing there?'"

annoyed you; but when we see anyone trying to get through a window at this hour of the night, we're bound to say something. I should sack that caretaker if I were you."

"I shall. Of course, I understand that you only did your duty. Have a little whisky before you go."

"Thank you, sir. I don't touch spirits as a rule."

"Then make this an exception."

There was a bottle and some glasses on the table. He poured something out of the bottle into one of the glasses. Adding what seemed water from a jug, he handed it to me. I doubt if at that time I had drunk whisky half-a-dozen times in my life; but I thought I would have a taste just then, if only to do honour to a toast which I kept to myself—the health of a certain young gentleman, not to speak of his mother. But hardly had I touched the stuff with my lips when I put the glass back again upon the table. It was that bitter I had never tasted anything like it.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

"I don't know what's wrong, but it doesn't seem right."

He took up the glass and sniffed at it.

"It doesn't. That caretaker again. Some pretty tricks the dear creature seems to have been playing. I'm afraid I've no other refreshment to offer you. Here's five shillings."

He held out two half-crowns.

"I'm obliged to you, sir; but I'd rather not take it, if you don't mind."

"I don't mind—if you don't. You're the first man in blue I've met who refused a tip. You appear to be a model officer, an all-round credit to the force."

Whether or not he meant it, I did not know and did not care. I went along the hall. He showed me out.

Directly I was in the street again, all my doubts returned. That there was something wrong, I felt a kind of persuasion. Whether it

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was something that called for my interference, was another question. I decidedly had nothing to go on up to then. But whether my gentleman was or was not Mr. Walter Parsons, and whether he was or was not the rightful tenant of No. 20, Quarnley Terrace, on one point I was clear—and that was that he had something on his mind. Something unpleasant, too. There had been two or three things which I could not help but notice. One thing was that, in spite of the coolness of the night, he was in a muck of perspiration, a fact of which he seemed himself to be unconscious. When he removed his hat, it stood in beads upon his forehead, and his hair was clammy with it. Yet, while he sweated, there was an odd pallor on his face, and that though I felt sure that ordinarily he was florid. He gave me the impression of a man who had recently had a tremendous shock. While he spoke with such an appearance of calm assurance, when he took hold of the bottle, his hand shook so that it was a wonder he did not spill the contents on the table. I had observed, too, the curious keenness with which he had watched me take up the glass, and how queerly he had started when I put it down.

"But it's no good my fancying things," I told myself, "like some old woman. The gentleman may have plenty of worries which have nothing to do with anyone but himself, and least of all with me. What I've got to do is to keep an eye upon the house—a particular eye; and if anything further happens, make sure that I am the first to know of it. While I am about it, I may as well make a note of what has happened up to now."

I took out my pocket-book and made a note. When I had finished and was putting back the book again, all at once I felt as if the ground were slipping away from underneath my feet. My head seemed to swim; everything about me seemed to be in sudden movement; I felt as if I had no legs left to stand upon. If it had not been that I reeled back against the wall, and that that was there to support me, I believe that I should have gone with a cracker on to the ground. The sensation continued for some seconds, and while it lasted I remained propped up against the wall. If the sergeant had come along just then, he would have said I had been drinking. And so I had—about the tenth part of a small teaspoonful of whisky-and-water. What would have happened if I had taken more, was what I was beginning to wonder. When the feeling as if the end of the world had come began to fade away, there came into my mouth instead a nauseous bitterness, and my head started throbbing as if it were going to burst.

"I couldn't feel worse if I'd been on the drink for a fortnight."

My pocket-book had fallen on to the pavement. As I stooped forward to pick it up, another wave of giddiness swept over me. Before I could recover myself forward, I went right on to my face. By the time I was back upon my feet, I was in a nice state of mud and dirt, and in a nice rage, too. I turned and shook my fist towards No. 20.

"You—angel! So the whisky was hocussed, was it? Don't talk to me about a caretaker! You did it yourself! All right, Mr. Walter Parsons, that may be one to you—though it's not so big a one as you intended. But before I have done with you, the laugh will be all upon the other side."

I suppose, looking back, the stuff in the whisky, the feeling I had been done, the tumble I had had, the dirt which I had picked up from the pavement—all these things together had got into my head and caused me to make a bit of an ass of myself. It is not part of a policeman's duty to stand in the middle of the pavement and shake his fist at people's houses, no matter what provocation he may have received. The various little items enumerated above had combined to upset my mental as well as my physical equilibrium. When I surveyed my uniform—what I could see of it—and recognised that it was plastered with slime, and felt the dirt upon my face, I do think that made me worse than anything. In those days I prided myself on being as neat as a new pin. No one had seen a speck of unnecessary dirt upon my uniform ever since I joined the force. It did make me mad to think that I had got myself into that state through my gentleman at No. 20. I fancy that it was that almost before anything else which made me determined to be even with him somehow. What I should say to the sergeant when he came along and saw the mess I was in, was more than I could tell. He would want some explanation before he could be brought to understand why or how I had laid myself flat on my face on the filthy pavement.

I had half a mind to go straight back and charge him then and there with an attempt to hocus. But a moment's reflection showed me that I had not the slightest evidence to go upon. The contents of the bottle and glass had probably already been emptied

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down the sink. Or if not, I should still have to prove that he was responsible for their condition, which would be very far from easy. There might be a caretaker in the matter, after all.

"Caretaker!" I grumbled to myself. "There's a lot of caretaker about it, I've no doubt. I'd like to caretaker him."

Quarnley Terrace was situate in what was called The Grove. The Grove was perhaps half a mile in length. The whole of it was in my beat. I was reluctant to go too far away from No. 20, though I doubt if I should have been able to give a really satisfactory reason; while, on the other hand, I was conscious that if I were not careful, it might—and probably would—be worse for me. I looked at my watch. The odds were that in less than sixty seconds the sergeant would reach the point right at the other end of the road and expect to find me there awaiting him. If he did not find me, and I could furnish no adequate reason for my absence—and, under such circumstances, a sergeant has his own idea of what an adequate reason is—there would be a nice how-d'ye-do. Off I started, walking at the rate of six miles an hour, when—as before—I heard a sound.

It should be understood that everything was very still. There was no wind. It was one of those nights when the slightest unusual noise attracts one's attention even when it is at a considerable distance. I suppose that was how I came to hear that sound then, because it was not a loud one, and it proceeded from some way behind me. It was like the falling of some solid body—as if, for instance, someone had thrown something out of a window, and it had come with a thud on to the ground. Stopping on the instant, I stood with every faculty of hearing on the alert.

Stillness. Then—something else. A swishing noise, as if a heavy body were being drawn along the pavement. I did not require to be told from whence it came. I said to myself that it came from No. 20.

Oblivious of the point at the end of the road, without a moment's hesitation I turned and doubled back upon my tracks. As I went, I heard something else—distinctly. The closing of a door. That finished it. If Mr. Walter Parsons had been so anxious to get into his house that he had had to effect an entry through the window, why, at that hour of the night, was he already leaving it again? I tore along at the top of my speed, expecting every moment to see his figure emerge into the roadway. If it had done so, there would have been a chase. But it did not. When I reached No. 20, I paused in my impetuous career. I thought it quite possible that Mr. Parsons was hiding behind a pillar, or a shrub, or something, and might jump out and give me one before I was prepared. A man who would hocus a drink would be game for anything. But though I stood still for a moment or two, to give him a chance, nothing happened. Then, flattering myself that I was prepared for anything, I began to move through the gate into the pitch-black garden. Still nothing. I listened. If my gentleman were hiding among the shrubs, then he kept very still. It would be madness for me to search for him in that darkness; so I turned the shutter of my lantern and flashed the light about the little slip of garden. And, behold! there was nothing.

Stop! There was!

As the circle of light moved round, it passed over a flower-bed. There I let it rest. At one place the flowers were all broken and crushed, as though some heavy object which had been on them had pressed them flat against the earth. The flowers in the rest of the bed were right enough. The damage had been confined to that one part. Just in front of where the mischief was—on the front door side—there was a mark on the edge of the bed, and on the bit of grass, which looked as if it had been caused by something which had been dragged along the ground.

I closed my lantern and stood again to listen. All was silent. The house was in darkness. Not a glimmer of light at any of the windows. Nothing to show that anyone had noticed my presence, or that there was anything alive within. Under the circumstances I felt that I should be justified in pointing out to whomever might be within, that the front door had recently been opened and shut, and that something—queer or otherwise—had been playing the mischief with that front garden. Ascending the steps, I knocked smartly. No one answered.

"Come, Mr. Walter Parsons, you can't be asleep already, so it's no good pretending that you are. And you must have heard that knock. So you may as well take the trouble to come and see who's here. But if you won't, I'll try again."

I tried again. I brought the knocker down against the door three or four times—good, hearty blows. Still there was no

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sign to show that the noise I made had been audible within. I went down the steps, intending to run over the front of the house once more with my bull's-eye, to see if anyone were peeping at me through a window, or anything of that sort. As I did so, someone spoke to me from behind.

"Why aren't you on your point? Is there anything wrong here?"

It was my sergeant's voice. I could not have said, just at the moment, if I was glad to hear it, or sorry.

"That's what I'm trying to find out. Do you know if anyone lives here of the name of Parsons—Walter Parsons?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Is he a tall, big-made man, with a heavy moustache?"

"There is a gentleman lives here named Walter Parsons, but he's not in the least like your description. I know him well by sight. He's a very little man, with a brown beard; I don't suppose he's over five feet high."

"Then there is something wrong. I thought as much."

"What do you mean? Look alive! What's happened?"

I told him what had happened, trying to look as much alive as I could manage, and to cram as much of the story as possible into the space which, so to speak, was at my command. He listened until, I suppose, he thought he had heard enough. Then he cut me short.

"That'll do. I'll have the rest later. The man you let go through the window is no more Mr. Parsons than I am. It strikes me you've done a pretty nice thing, my lad. What we've got to do now is to find out who your friend is, and where he is."

Mounting the steps in his turn, the sergeant played a lively tune upon the knocker. While we were waiting for the answer which did not come, he kept shooting questions at me, commenting on my answers in a way which made me turn hot and cold at once. Sergeant Ives was a smart officer; he got nearly to the top of the tree in the force before he died; but when he chose, he had a tongue which rasped like a file.

Seeing that not the slightest apparent notice was taken of the din which he had made, he asked me still another question, the clincher.

"I suppose you haven't been dreaming, and that you are sure the man you describe did go through the window?"

Had I been dreaming? Was I sure? My manner when I replied ought to have dispelled any fragment of doubt he might have had on that point, unless he took me for a first-class liar, or an A1 idiot, or the pair of them.

"I'm as sure that I've told you exactly what took place, as I am that you and I are standing here."

"All right! Keep your temper! You'll want all you've got, by the look of things, a little later on! Then if you are sure, we've got to get into this house somehow."

Smash! Smash! Smash! Smash! He went again at the knocker. The wonder was he did not burst the door right in. I will lay odds he shook it. One would have thought the clatter he made would have roused the whole neighbourhood. As a matter of fact, hardly had he stopped bang-banging, than a window went up above our heads, and a voice called out to us.

"Who's that making that noise down there?"

My heart went up into my mouth. I imagined that we had roused my gentleman at last; and that he would hardly shout at us in that cock-a-doodle tone of voice if he had not some sort of right to be where he was; and that, in consequence, I should be out of the wood. But I was mistaken, as a momentary upward glance proved. The window had not been opened at No. 20 at all, but at No. 19, next door, and the individual who was leaning half out of it was not my gentleman, but somebody else entirely.

The sergeant spoke to him.

"Do you know the people who live in this house?"

"I do."

"Is the name Parsons?"

"It is."

"Do you know if Mr. Parsons has come home to-night?"

"I know that he hasn't. He is staying with his family at Hastings. I had a letter from him this morning to say that they are returning on Saturday. If it had been his intention to return to-night, he would certainly have let me know."

"Someone who calls himself Walter Parsons, and who says that the caretaker has gone out, and that he left his key behind, not long ago got into the house through the window."

"Caretaker! key! There is no caretaker; and the key's in my charge. Some member of my family goes into the house each day to see that everything's all right."

"Then if you have the key, it strikes me that you'd better come down and let us

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"I rushed at the blazing heap, grabbed at the handle of the bag."

in, to see who that party is and what he's up to."

"I'll be with you in half a minute."

The speaker's head and shoulders were withdrawn. The window through which he had thrust them was closed. We awaited his reappearance down below. And while we waited, the sergeant improved the fleeting moments by firing off in my direction some observations of an agreeable nature.

"It occurs to me, my lad, that you've perhaps managed to set yourself up for the rest of your life. You mayn't be aware of it, but it's not generally supposed to be part of a policeman's duty to give a burglar a leg up through the window of the crib he's engaged in cracking, though the members of the force might be more popular in certain quarters if it were."

I let him talk. I knew better than to put in my oar. It was understood that if you let Sergeant Ives have his say all to himself, and talk himself right out, then that was about all there was to it. But if you tried talking back, why, then you might look out for ructions. Yet when he spoke to me in that strain, it was only the thought of Mary and of that new son of mine which helped me to keep my tongue back between my teeth. I endeavoured to console myself by resolving that what the sergeant was giving me I would add to the balance I owed "Mr. Walter Parsons," and make it even—and a trifle over—with him. I was not proposing to let any man get me treated as if I were a half-baked sawney for nothing at all. There are those, maybe, who let people jump on them, and ask for more. But I am not one.

By the time the gentleman from next door put in an appearance on the scene, I was as nearly bursting with rage as I ever was in the whole course of my life. In another second or two, I should have had to open a safety-valve to let something off.

"Got the key?" asked the sergeant.

"Yes, I have the key. And I also have a bad cold. I don't want to make it worse. I hope you're not bringing me out of my

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warm bed, at this time of night, and in this sort of weather, for nothing at all."

"Then I hope we are; and for your friend's sake you ought to hope so, too. You don't want to have his house entered and robbed while it is in your charge. What's this?"

"That's the key. I think, under the circumstances, that perhaps you had better open the door."

The sergeant looked at him. So did I. He was tall and thin, and wore glasses, and was about as unathletic looking a party as he well could have been. I do not fancy he had much stomach for the kind of adventure which the situation suggested. Ives took the key, put it in the door, tried to turn it—in vain.

"Is there anything patent about it? What's the trick?"

"There is no trick. It turns quite easily—from right to left."

"Then perhaps you'll come and turn it. There's something in being used to a key."

The party from No. 19 displayed evident reluctance. He was standing at the bottom of the steps, and seemed to prefer to stay there.

"It only wants a sharp twist."

"Then come and give it the sharp twist it wants."

The spectacled gentleman ascended the steps, it struck me, a little gingerly, as if he half expected that something would fly out of the house and spring at him. He tackled the key. But it declined to turn for him any more than for the sergeant.

"It won't move. That's strange. My wife and I went over the house together only this evening; I opened the door myself. It opened quite easily then. Now there seems something wrong."

"I'm afraid there is. Is that the only key you have?"

"The latch-key is the only one that's wanted. The big lock is caught back."

"It was. I expect the chap who is inside has let it go, and trapped the latch to make things surer. He doesn't want anyone else to get in too easily while he's there." Ives turned to me. "You'll have to follow him the way he went—through the window."

In under half a minute I was on the sill—the one on which I had first caught sight of "Mr. Walter Parsons." I had my clasp-knife open and had slipped the catch of the window inside a minute. Extraordinary how insecurely windows are fastened. There is not one in a hundred which would present any difficulty to a boy who has just been breeched. Up went the sash.

"Look out for anyone going for you before you get into the room." I was looking out. But there were no signs that anyone was conscious of my proceedings. The sergeant issued further instructions. "Directly you're in, come straight round and open the door for us."

Thrusting the blind aside, I shone my lantern round the room. There was no one in it. I stepped on to the floor. As had been the case in the apartment into which "Mr. Walter Parsons" had conducted me, here also practically everything which the place contained was shrouded from sight. There was nothing to suggest that it had been recently occupied, or that there had been any unauthorised interference with its contents. But that something curious was taking place somewhere about the premises I recognised immediately upon my entrance.

So soon as I had my feet upon the floor, and had let the blind fall back into its place behind me, I perceived a peculiar smell; and—what was it? Was it the sound of someone calling? Were they the cries of a person in pain? Was it some sort of animal? Or—what? There was an odd noise coming from somewhere.

I moved quickly across the room, to find the door shut and locked upon the other side. Since my gentleman must have gone through it when he came in, it was tolerably clear he must have locked it. I returned to announce my discovery.

"Something funny's going on in here; there's a queer smell and a queerer sound. But I can't get out of this room, the door's locked on the outside."

The sergeant's reply came short and sharp.

"Break it open. If you can't do it by yourself, I'll come in and help you."

"I think I can manage to do it."

And I did manage. I am six feet two and a half inches high, and I was not a light weight even in those days. I took a little run and gave that door my shoulder once—twice—and the third time went clean through. It was a trifle unexpected. I had thought it would have offered more resistance. The consequence was that I found myself a bit mixed up with the splinters. Anyhow, I was in the hall in a brace of shakes. When I got there, the smell or something seemed to hit me in the face. The sounds which I had heard were more audible than ever. They set my nerves all of a twitter. If someone or something were

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not half mad with pain, or terror, or both, then I was a Dutchman. And quite close at hand.

I rushed to the hall door. The sergeant shouted to me from without—

"Is that you, Coleman?"

"Yes, sir. There's something very wrong indeed inside here, but Heaven knows what it is. I'm going to open the door. . . . I can't!"

"Why can't you?"

"The big lock's locked, and the trap of the upper one seems jammed. I expect that chap's taken away the key."

"All right. I'll come in through the window. Do nothing till I come."

By the time I was back in the front room the sergeant was in it, too. The moment he was, he gave an exclamation.

"Why, the place is on fire!"

On fire? Of course. What an idiot I had been not to understand at once! That explained the suffocating odour—the acrid something which was stealing up our nostrils.

"Then it's in the room at the back."

That was the room to which I had already been introduced, in which I had been offered the hocussed whisky. We both of us hurried out into the hall to the back room door, standing for an instant to listen.

"It's in there right enough. Can't you hear it?"

I could. The noise of what sounded like flames was unmistakable. As we stood, there came another sound—a yell which seemed to go right through me.

"That's not fire."

"Someone must be burning."

"Then it's the chap himself."

"The chap himself? What do you mean? How do you know? Open the door!"

I stood next to it. I turned the handles.

"It's locked. He's locked himself in!" I struck the panel with my hand. "Inside there! Who's in there?"

No answer. All was still; there was only the roar of the flames.

"The man must be burning to death! You'll have to burst the door. Only look out for yourself as you do it."

I burst it, that time—as I only had to drive the lock back—at the first try. The room within was on the high road to become a flaming furnace. There was a horrible stench of what seemed to be some sort of burning spirit. The heat rushed out at us. It was all I could do to stand my ground while I looked for the man from whom that yell had come. He could not have been consumed to ashes while we had been standing without the door. It was incredible, impossible. Yet there was no one to be seen—no sign of anything that had ever been endowed with life.

But I did catch sight of something that made me stare. Almost everything that was in the room—tables, sideboard, chairs, all kinds of odds and ends—had been gathered into a higgledy-piggledy sort of heap in the middle of the floor. They were already blazing merrily away, bidding fair to form a sufficiently expensive bonfire. On the top, in the centre, so that the flames were rising about it on every side, was a kit-bag—if I could credit the evidence of my own senses, the identical kit-bag which I had last seen in solitary possession of the booking-office at St. John's Wood Station, either that one or its twin brother. It stood in danger of immediate destruction. Not only was it in the midst of the blaze, but already the sides of the bag were giving forth an ominous smoke. As I watched, one of them broke into flame. I do not know what prompted me—because it was only a bag, after all—but when I saw that, I ran into the room.

"What are you doing?" cried the sergeant. "Is there anyone there?"

I did not stop to answer. The smoke was blinding and suffocating me both at once. I felt as if the floor were giving way beneath my feet, as if the skin were cracking on my face. I rushed at the blazing heap, grabbed at the handle of the bag. It was heavier than I expected, but I managed to get a good hold of it and went staggering with it to the door.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Ives. "What is it you've got there?"

"I don't know."

I did not. At that time I did not even know what the thing was called. I hauled it into the front room. Although it was no longer actually flaming, it was smoking enough to choke you. And the heat must have tried its constitution, because no sooner had I got it into the other room than one of the sides came clean away, and, with it, the contents dropped on to the floor.

"What's that fallen out of it?" asked Ives.

I was leaning over, staring with something more than amazement.

"I believe—it's a man!"

"A man!" Down went Ives upon his knees. The flames were beginning to come out of the next room into the passage, so that we could see quite plainly. "Good

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Heavens! It's Mr. Parsons! He can't have been inside that bag."

"He was."

"Is this the man who got through the window?"

"He's not in the least bit like him."

"Then there's been a nice game on somewhere."

"He's not dead."

As I lifted his head from the floor, I felt him shudder.

"Thank goodness for that! We shall have to take him through the window and get him out of this."

"I'll see to that."

I did. As the sergeant had said, he was such a little chap, I bore him in my arms as if he were a baby. With a little help from Ives, I got him out into the garden, and then into the house next door—No. 19.

That's my story. And the explanation is not the least strange part of it.

The party whom I saw get through the window was a gentleman of the name of Turndall—Philip Turndall. He was Parsons' partner—which explained how his portrait stood so handy on the mantelpiece. Messrs. Parsons and Turndall were solicitors—a firm of good old family lawyers, with tin cases stuffed full of their clients' title-deeds, and bonds, and shares, and that kind of thing. Mr. Turndall, who was a person of lofty notions in the money-spending line, took it into his head to treat the contents of those tin cases as if they were his own property. He raised money on them right and left without thinking it necessary to mention what he was doing to Mr. Parsons. At last discovery stared him in the face. Somebody wanted something which ought to have been in one of those cases, but happened to be elsewhere. Mr. Turndall concocted an ingenious scheme to account for its absence.

He brought his partner up to London on pretence of business. Towards evening, when the clerks had gone home, and Parsons was about to return to Hastings, he produced a bottle of champagne and suggested that the other should have a share of it to help him on his journey. Parsons consented. He had a glass. He remembered so much, and no more. Beyond doubt the champagne was flavoured with the same stuff as that whisky was. Probably Parsons was unconscious almost as soon as he had swallowed it. Turndall knew that he would continue unconscious for a considerable time. He was too nice-minded to commit murder by actual violence. So he picked up his partner off the floor and packed him into a brand new kit-bag which he might have bought for that special purpose. Parsons was small; the bag was large. Neatly folded up into a compact parcel by Turndall's vigorous hands, room was found for him, though probably no live man was ever confined in closer quarters. Some time after the shades of night had fallen, with the kit-bag in one hand, and something containing methylated spirit in the other, Mr. Turndall went across London to his friend's residence at No. 20, Quarnley Terrace.

His idea was to enter unobserved, and then—with the aid of that methylated spirit—to burn the house, with Mr. Parsons in it, still unconscious. When, perhaps the next day, he heard of the fire, he would have been shocked. And he would have been still more shocked on discovering that someone had been making free with the contents of those tin cases. The dreadful fact would have been revealed that Parsons was a thief. The whole shameful story would have been made too plain. The man had fled to escape the hands of justice, having first set fire to his house to conceal the evidences of his guilt. And Mr. Philip Turndall would have been regarded as an injured innocent.

Unfortunately, his game was spoiled by my happening to hear the click of the window-catch. It must have been an awkward moment for him when I flashed my bull's-eye upon him as he crouched upon the window-sill. No wonder he perspired; the marvel was that he should have kept so cool. The kit-bag must have been in the garden all the time. It was surprising how I came to overlook it. After I went, he came out and fetched it in. That was the noise I heard. When I returned and started hammering at the door, he must have recognised that the game was completely up. While Sergeant Ives was trying to get in at the front, he got out at the back. He must have gone straight off to his own rooms; and during the rest of the night he must have had a pretty bad time. He spent part of it in writing a nice little confession on a nice little sheet of paper. In the morning the confession was found on the table, and he was a corpse on the bed—a case of *felo de se*.

That drugged champagne was, in a sense, possibly Mr. Parsons' salvation. Considering his prolonged incarceration in that dreadful prison, how he had been dragged round London, and dumped down at St. John's

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Wood Station while his partner refreshed himself, it was marvellous how he should have suffered no after ill effects. When I saw him a day or two later, you could not have told that anything out of the way had ever happened to him.

No. 20 was damaged, but not destroyed; Mr. Turndall had been interrupted. Mr. Parsons managed to drag things out of the quicksands amidst which his partner had got them. I understand that his firm has a high reputation in London to-day. He never took another partner. And every year since he has sent me something in recognition of the festive season.

My boy—he was my last-born as well as my first-born, for we have never had another child—is now a policeman, like his father was.

So now you understand how it is that, to this hour, whenever I see a kit-bag, a curious feeling goes all over me.

THE WILL O' THE WISP.

FROM A WATER COLOUR BY H. M. BENNETT.

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"THE NEW YEAR PARTY." FROM THE PICTURE BY LUCIEN DAVIS, R.I.

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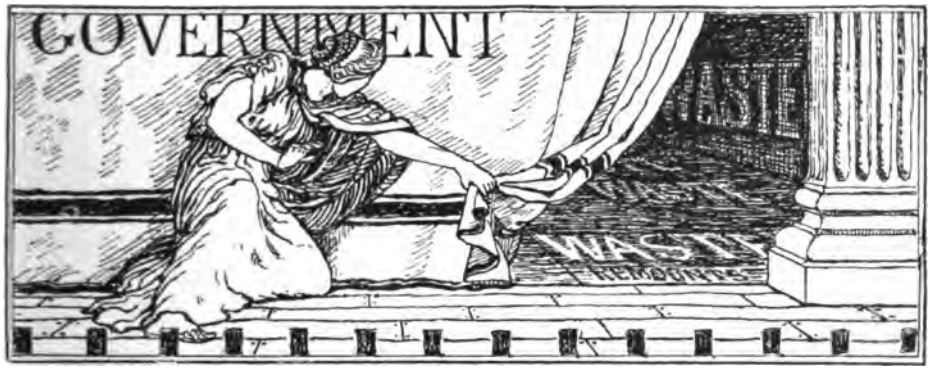

THE WASTE OF PUBLIC MONEY.

By Ernest E. Williams,

Author of "The Imperial Heritage," "Made in Germany," "Marching Backward," and "The Foreigner in the Farmyard."

No. II.—THE REMOUNT SCANDALS.

Note.—I wish at the commencement of each of these articles to remove a possible cause of misapprehension. It is necessary, in the course of them, to say hard things of members of the present Government; but that is because the present Government has been in office for a number of years beyond which, in order to keep the illustrations of bureaucratic methods up to date, it has not been thought desirable to travel. Criticisms involving the acts of Ministers are not to be interpreted as in any sense a party attack, and it is not suggested that had the Opposition been in office, its members would have done better.—E. E. W.

IT has been seen that the lack of business-like instinct and the general inefficiency which characterise our great spending Departments is illustrated in the meat contract scandals which were a feature of the South African war; but a kindred scandal, of an even more serious character, remains to be recalled, if that lack of business capacity and that inefficiency are to be adequately measured.

In the meat contracts we got good enough meat, though we paid far too much for it; but in the horse purchases, though we again paid extravagant prices, we did not get serviceable horses, in so much that our military operations suffered seriously in consequence. The enemy was always getting away when he ought to have been caught, and he got away because our horses were unequal to the work required of them. Many and many a victory was not followed up because the horses could not be called upon for the further exertion which the Boers were able to get out of their horses. And so it is reasonable to assume—serious though the assumption be—that the war was prolonged because of the inefficiency of our horses; that, therefore, many men lost their lives, much treasure was spent, and the various horrors and inconveniences of war were lengthened because the horses put into the field were not good enough.

"Since the beginning of the war," said Mr. McKenna, in the House of Commons,* "37½ millions have been spent on the two items of transport by the War Office and remounts purchased by the War Office. At least 10 of these 37½ millions have gone in over-payments to contractors. Two-thirds of the extra income-tax had gone to line the greedy pockets of the exorbitant contractors, all on account of either the ignorance of the War Office or its unwillingness to probe these facts to the bottom."

It was to the horses purchased in Hungary that what are known as the Remount scandals chiefly relate, though the Irish scandal, which has been the subject of criminal proceedings, is within recent memory, and there is strong ground for suspicion that had like oppor-

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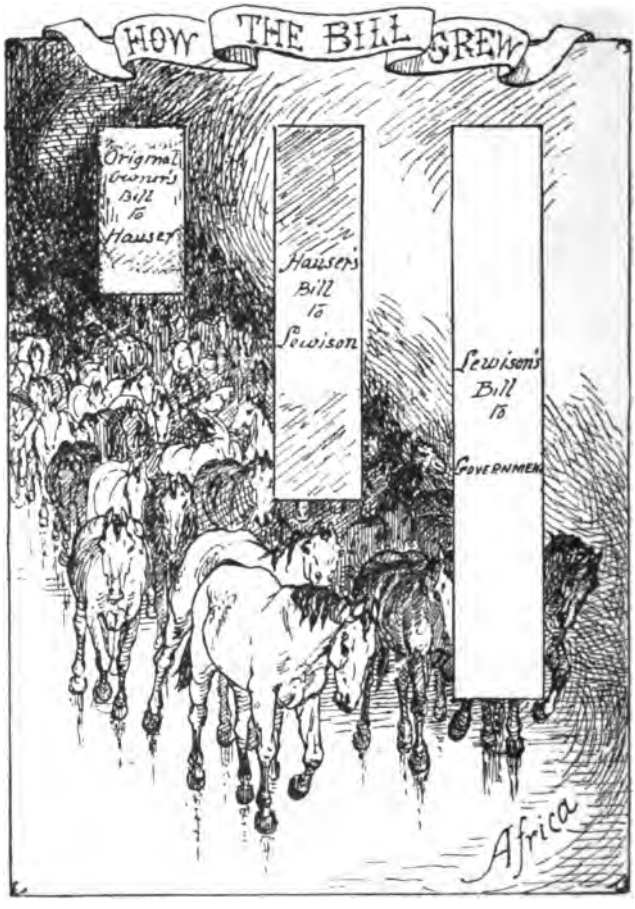
* March 18, 1902.

tunities of exposure arisen, scandals nearly, if not quite, as bad might have been found in respect to the horses purchased in other parts of the world.

During the early, dark days of the war, when the need for largely reinforcing the troops in South Africa became pressing, the War Office delegated some of its work to an Imperial Yeomanry Committee. This Committee was charged with the purchase of horses for the Yeomanry. The work was placed particularly in the hands of Colonel St. Quintin, who, having no information of his own or at his command, asked a Captain Hartigan if he knew where horses could be obtained. Captain Hartigan produced one Lewison, having first arranged with him for a 2½ per cent. commission. Lewison obtained a contract for 1,000 horses from Hungary, to be delivered free on board at Fiume, at £35 each, a figure which is only paid for the best cavalry mounts. A somewhat similar contract had been made with another man named Ranucci. Lewison bought Ranucci's contract for £8,000, subsequently reduced to £7,000, as the War Office Committee by this time had induced Lewison to accept £33 16*s.* 8*d.* instead of £35. Lewison, who was not himself a horse-dealer, or in a position to buy horses directly, went to Vienna, and there met a dealer named Hauser, with whom he contracted for the horses at £22 per head, delivered at a place called Szebadka. The transport charges thence to Fiume were about £3 per head. Hauser bought the horses for from £8 to £12 per head, and some, it is said, for £6 or £7. Now see what this comes to. If we allow £10 per horse and £4 for transport, the Government was buying for £33 16*s.* 8*d.* animals for which it should not have paid more than £14, delivered at the port of embarkation. Here at once is more than justification for Mr. Whitley's charge, which I quoted in my last article, that for every £1 we have spent on the war, 10*s.* have gone into contractors' pockets.

It appears that 1,500 horses were purchased at £33 16*s.* 8*d.* A month later Lewison was given another contract, for 2,309 cobs at £26; and when Colonel St. Quintin was asked to justify the difference, he said that in the interval he had learned something about prices. He had agreed to the original £35 because he was told that that was the price the Austrian Army paid for its horses, taking no note of the fact that the cobs he was ordering were a different kind of animal altogether from the cavalry horses for which



the Austrian Army paid the higher figure. But even when the second contract of £26 was entered into, it will be seen from the figures I have given above that the Government was paying £10 or £12 per horse more than it should have paid.

At a later date the War Office itself (not the Yeomanry Committee) also bought Hungarian horses. This time one middleman, Lewison, was discarded, and the Government went straight to the second middleman, Hauser. By doing so it managed to save a

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bit, obtaining the horses—5,346—at £20 per head. This, it will be seen, still left the worthy Hauser in possession of so big a profit that it is no wonder that, as our military *attaché* at Vienna said, Hauser, a small man before the war contracts, became afterwards one of the leading men in the Hungarian horse-dealing world. Yet when these purchases were brought before the Government by Sir Blundell Maple, it refused to send out to investigate, and merely scolded its informant; nor did it appoint a committee of inquiry until after the matter had become a public scandal.

And what of the quality of the animals for which these exorbitant prices were paid? Lord Rosebery told in the House of Lords a story of a traveller in Hungary who said he had seen no bad horses there, and upon mentioning the circumstances got the reply: "No, they have all been sold to the British Government." Lord Rosebery did not vouch for the truth of this anecdote. But, according to Mr. T. P. O'Connor, a native observer of what went on in Hungary said: "God grant more opportunities of purifying our native breeds from its dregs! On the other hand, I was filled with anxiety when I asked myself: What conception will the foreigner have of Hungarian horse-breeding when such specimens are described as Hungarian horses?" And another observer said: "The rubbish of the Hungarian stock of horses was exported for the poor British soldiers." Such statements as these, applied to all the horses purchased, may be exaggerated, but we have the word of Colonel Wardrop, our military *attaché* at Vienna, and one of the best living judges of horse-flesh, that the majority of horses bought in Hungary were more of the class of ladies' phaeton ponies than animals suited for a rough country. The most favourable official report upon these horses was that by Colonel Birkbeck, who described them as "showy little horses, full of quality, but have done very badly, and are universally condemned as 'flat-catchers.'" And there is Lord Kitchener's own telegram about horses in January, 1901: "Some arriving are not well selected.... Yesterday I inspected Bays, who have hitherto done no work; their horses are the wrong stamp to last in this country, and fear we shall lose many of them when they begin work." Probably this telegram does not refer entirely to the Hungarian horses, but as altogether about 24,000 horses came from Hungary, it is fair to assume that some of them are included in the condemnation. And the Commander-in-Chief's fears as to losing many of the horses were only too completely realised all through the war. Pitiful stories have been told of the deaths of horses in large numbers almost before they had started work at the front; and though this may be due in part to the hurried way in which the animals had to be sent forward immediately after landing from their exhausting sea voyage, much of the loss must also be attributed to the inferior and unsuitable character of the horses themselves.

Now that, in brief, is the story of the Hungarian horse purchases. I have not dwelt upon certain scandals connected with the purchases, which were publicly discussed some time ago, because under the best system reprehensible acts may be committed by individuals. The simple facts stated above suffice to show how the country has been robbed, but the scandalous character of the robbery may be made yet more plain by the recital of some further facts.

And first a word or two about the transport charges. As though not enough money had been wasted in the purchase of the horses themselves, more money was wasted over transporting them to South Africa. Practically the whole of the contracts were made with one firm, a firm which used other vessels besides its own, and so acted as broker as well as contracting ship-owner. By some means or other this firm managed to get rid of all competition. If another firm tendered, it was given to understand that its tender was not wanted; and if its price was lower than that of the favoured firm, the favoured firm was made acquainted with the fact, so that it might alter its prices accordingly. Nasty things have been said in public as to why this particular firm was so favoured, but I need not repeat them here; it will be enough for our present purposes to note the enormous charges paid for transportation during the war. These included prices ranging up to £18 per head for transporting horses to South Africa from Australia, at the same time that another firm in Australia was taking horses for General Baden-Powell at £8 per head; and even this contract was sub-let at £6 10*s.* a head, and the sub-contractor said he made a good profit out of it. And with regard to the transport of the Hungarian horses to South Africa, a similar desire to pay as much as possible seems to have been cherished. A dealer named Vickers, whose contract for horses was bought out by Lewison, had

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made an agreement with Mr. Van Laun to carry the horses to South Africa at £16 per head. Lewison, after Vickers had been set aside, contracted with Mr. Van Laun for the transport of the first 1,500 horses at £26 13*s.* 4*d.* per head, and beyond that number at £28. Yet Vickers said that he had informed Colonel St. Quintin, of the Yeomanry Committee, of his arrangement with Mr. Van Laun, so that ignorance of the lower offer can hardly be pleaded, although ignorance would not exonerate men whose business it was not to be ignorant concerning the prices they paid.

To return now to the horse purchases. I have already said that, though the principal exposure was with reference to the Hungarian purchases, it was likely that purchases made elsewhere were also open to accusations of waste. For example, a gentleman with a large business in Buenos Ayres told Lord Tweedmouth that the contracts for horse purchases made there were the subject of scandal and ridicule to the whole British colony; and Lord Tweedmouth contended that the payment of very high prices, not only in Argentina, but in Italy, and in England itself, was a notorious fact. Mr. Philips, in a House of Commons debate upon the subject of the inquiry held into the Hungarian purchases, "ventured to say that if there were an inquiry in reference to the purchase of horses in England and in the Argentine, scandals would be revealed quite as great, and perhaps greater, than those connected with the purchase of Hungarian horses." Nor are the American purchases above suspicion. Mr. C. Hobhouse told the House of Commons, with regard to the purchases at New Orleans, that the Army veterinary officer employed to pass the horses had gained so great an amount that it had become matter of notoriety and gossip in the town. "The officer, indeed, had been told that he must bring an action or take the consequences; but so great had been his illicit gains, that he had abandoned his certainty of promotion and his pension rights, and had been allowed to do what the War Office never ought to have allowed him to do—namely, retire from the service." Mr. Hobhouse referred further to the bad reports which had been made concerning the Australian horses, and declared that the mules purchased in Italy were a source not only of inconvenience, but of danger.

But what could better illustrate the methods of our bureaucracy than the story which the Earl of Lonsdale told the House of Lords concerning a purchase in England. This expert judge of horses, having assured the House that there was no Department in the public service out of which so much amusement was to be gained, related the following incident, which has doubtless its amusing side, but which must inspire less pleasant feelings as well in the Englishman's mind. "The Inspector of Remounts," said Lord Lonsdale, "sent to examine five horses, the property of a Master of Hounds in the North of England. Four of these horses were registered—three at £80 and one at £100. The officer sent down carefully examined the horses in the stable, and four horses were selected—three at £80 and one at £100. This sagacious officer had selected four horses which were just being sent off to the auction market as absolutely useless. They were to have been put up as 'the property of a gentleman,' because the owner hardly liked to put his name to them. These horses were put into an open truck, without clothing, in frosty weather, and sent to Aldershot, where one of them died from a severe cold." And to this story must be appended the information that the number of horses registered by the Government for requisition amounted to 14,550, for each of which 10*s.* a year was paid. Yet these horses, Mr. Brodrick told the House of Commons, are examined yearly to see if it is worth while to pay the fee.

Another instance may be quoted, belonging to a late period of the war, by which time one would have thought the bureaucrats would have learned something, if they had the capacity for learning. In the *Times* of Feb. 17th, 1902, that journal's St. Petersburg correspondent reported that the Remount Department had endeavoured to buy horses in Russia in mid-winter, which, as is well known to everybody who has the least acquaintance with the country, is the worst time that could have been chosen. Not content with this preliminary blunder, the Department sent its agents into districts where, indeed, good horses are plentiful, but where it is quite impossible to buy them, because the Russian Remount Department, less haphazard in its methods than the English, has marked off those districts as preserves, and horses cannot be bought in them to any number without the express permission of the Russian War Minister. This fact our Remount Department should have known in any case, and at the least it could have learned it from inquiries in the country; but such inquiries it evidently

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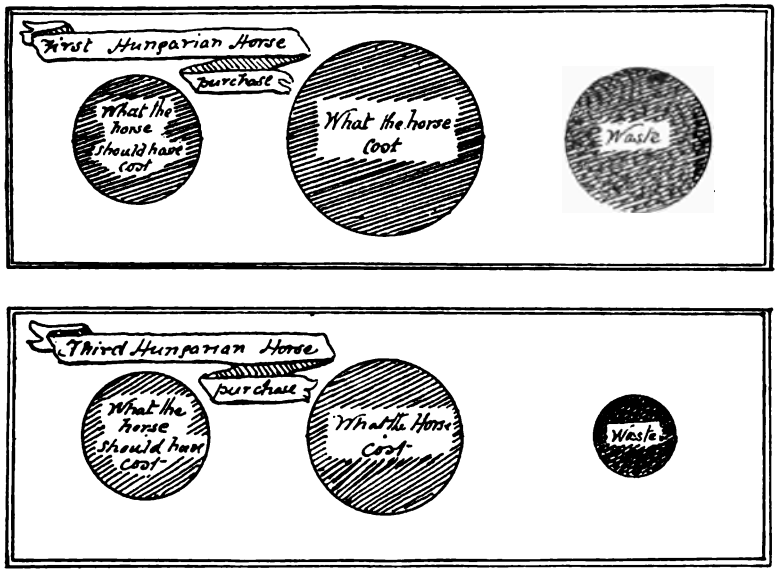
neglected to make, for it sent its agents into one of these very districts. Naturally, when at length the necessary permission from the Russian War Minister was asked, it was refused, and thus some more of the British taxpayer's money was wasted, while delay in making necessary purchases was caused during the learning by a Government Department of some of its business, with which it should have been acquainted all along.

Now we come to the only possible defence on the part of the Government—that a great emergency suddenly arose, in coping with which it was not to be expected that good bargains should be made, and that in the circumstances the Government did all that could be expected of it. Let us see how far this contention holds.



First with regard to the Hungarian horses. Assuming the need for purchasing horses in Hungary, did the Government set about its task in the right way?

The duty of a Remount Department is to collect information. We have it upon the authority of the Committee appointed to investigate the scandal—a Committee so partial to the Government that, not without reason, it has been termed a whitewashing Committee—that "no steps had apparently been taken since 1884 to ascertain the best sources of supply in that country, the best methods of tapping those sources, or the most reliable people to employ." The large Government purchases, as distinct from the Imperial Yeomanry purchases, began to be made in April, 1900, when the war had been in progress six months. And not even during those six months, though the need for obtaining a heavy supply had been plain throughout the time, had any steps been taken. All that was known was that horses had been purchased by the Imperial Yeomanry Committee, through Lewison and Hauser, in the extravagant manner I have already related.

Something else, however, was, or might have been, known. Right back in December, 1899, Sir John Blundell Maple sent his trainer, Mr. Alec Waugh, to General Truman, the head of the Remount Department. Mr. Waugh knew Hungary and its horse capacities intimately. He spoke German, was a member of the Royal Veterinary College, and had also a German diploma. Mr. Waugh collected a lot of information upon the subject of what might be done in Hungary: it was embodied in correspondence which he took with him to General Truman's office. Here was a valuable opportunity for the Department. And how did General Truman treat it? He told Mr. Waugh that they were not wanting any horses in Hungary—this a few weeks before the Yeomanry purchases began to be made. Mr. Waugh went away, leaving his valuable correspondence behind him for the Department's use, and General Truman promptly lost it. He apparently threw it on one side as being as useless as he confessed to the Committee he regarded Mr. Waugh's own proffered services. "I had purchasing officers," said General Truman, "and I did not think it at all necessary to employ the servant of a civilian." Much money, and perhaps much loss of life, would have been saved if he had omitted this tribute to red-tape conceit.

But the despised trainer was not the only expert whose offer to help was rejected. Read this quotation from the letter of a

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gentleman in the *Times* of Feb. 13th, 1902: "Being intimately acquainted with Hungary and Roumania and the leading people there, when the demand for horses became urgent, on Jan. 10th, 1900, I gave the War Office and Imperial Yeomanry five first-class introductions, and information generally, in the hopes that through them not only would the War Office obtain proper supplies and fair treatment, but also that trustworthy advice and guidance that only local gentlemen of position and experience could give. I am informed that not the smallest use was made of these introductions in any shape or form by the authorities. I then set the cables in motion, and was enabled to make an offer of large quantities of horses at £20 each or less, to be inspected and prices fixed at Budapest and Bucharest, stating also that up to 20,000 suitable animals could be obtained from Russia, through Bucharest, in addition. The offer was refused. May I mention that the horses, which are common to the rough Herkulesbad (Hungary), to Tunn-Severin (Roumania) country, and which are famous for their extraordinary strength, pluck, and surefootedness, fetch (or did so in August, 1898, when I was offered as many hundreds as I wished) £9 to £10 each?"

It is worth while comparing the prices mentioned in this letter with the prices the Government paid. Both this gentleman's offer and Sir Blundell Maple's are worth noting in connection with Mr. Brodrick's contention that it was necessary to go to Hauser. It may also be mentioned that at a later period the New South Wales Agent-General offered from 1,000 to 3,000 suitable horses at about 16 guineas for a cavalry horse, 30 guineas for an artillery horse, and 12 guineas for a mounted infantry horse.

But after all, private citizens must, perhaps, not complain too much of neglect at the hands of the Government; for the Government actually omitted to avail itself of the services of Colonel Wardrop, our military *attaché* at Vienna, an officer who, by reason of his position, was obviously able to afford valuable advice respecting the purchase of horses in Hungary, and who was besides, since he is well known as one of the best horsemen and judges of horses living, peculiarly well fitted to render service. True, Colonel St. Quintin, on behalf of the Imperial Yeomanry, did send one telegram unsigned and *en clair* to Colonel Wardrop, who sent at once to the War Office for further instructions. But afterwards neither Colonel St. Quintin nor the War Office made the slightest effort to communicate with Colonel Wardrop, though he was anxious to offer his services. Needless to say, the military *attachés* in the other countries in which horses were purchased were neglected in the same manner. Captain Lee, M.P., who, in the earlier days of the war, was military *attaché* at Washington, complained to the House of Commons that he was not informed that there was any intention of buying horses in the United States, or asked to give such assistance "as his position implied he was competent to do." He only learned that British officers were buying in the United States by reading the American newspapers. Lord Lansdowne, defending this remarkable negligence, said: "I doubt extremely whether anything would have been gained by dragging the military *attachés* into the matter. I should certainly be inclined to suggest that it would be impossible to use them as agents for the purchase of horses." "The utmost use they could have been," he added, "was to give the names of vendors." Well, even that might have saved some of the scandals. Happily Lord Lansdowne's is not the general view. Even the Hungarian Purchase Committee declared its surprise at the failure to communicate with the military *attachés*, and recommended "that in future the Remount Department should be held responsible for obtaining such information, and for keeping it up to date by systematic reference to the military *attachés*."

The above facts demonstrate that even under the existing system the scandals in connection with the Remount purchases might have been avoided. But the system itself has broken down under the test of war and proved its incapacity. When speaking just now of the attempt to purchase horses in Russia, I mentioned that the Russian War Office organises its supply of horses with foresight. Now, foresight and preparedness for emergencies are just what are lacking at our own War Office. As a service correspondent of the *Financial News* wrote in that journal: "The fault lay with the War Office system, which, like most War Office systems, consisted in letting things drift into a hopeless condition, and then making heroic efforts to retrieve that condition. If we can imagine, by a wide stretch of imagination, the War Office in the position of a private trading company, it is not difficult to foresee what would have been done. Imagine a private trading company, with any pretensions to good management,

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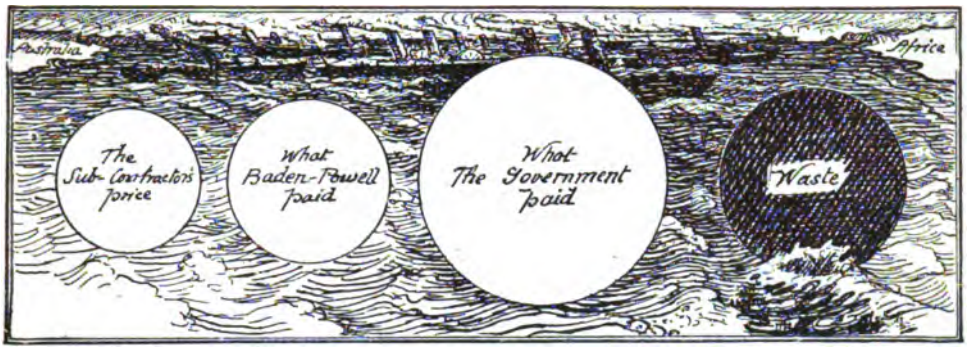

knowing that it would have to meet an enormous demand in a certain article, not making arrangements far in advance to obtain that article in sufficient quantities from every quarter of the globe where it could be obtained. Apparently the War Office never troubled itself in the matter till the demand was acute, and then sent its agents out hastily to repair the oversight as best they could."

It is not easy to say how much of this unreadiness is due to individual incapacity or carelessness, or the influence of the bureaucratic atmosphere, and how much is the result of inadequate organisation. Doubtless all these factors are present, but it is worth noting here that, according to the best expert opinion, the Remount Department had been starved prior to the war; notwithstanding the representations pointing to the serious nature of starving such a department had been made to the military authorities, the Remount Department was understaffed. Now, the last thing I wish to impress upon my readers is that understaffing of Government Departments is a general feature of the service, for, speaking generally, the exact opposite is the case; the small modicum of work, and much of it of an unnecessary kind, which is performed in Government offices is a public reproach. But among the unbusinesslike, cheeseparing economy here and there is a normal accompaniment of wastefulness in the main and in big matters. And this understaffing of the Remount Department is a case in point. Not enough men were employed to organise the vital task of securing a proper and adequate supply of horses, though at the same time in other offices you find rows of clerks trying to kill their few hours of office duty by reading newspapers or writing dramatic and literary criticism. The understaffing was not found oppressive in the ante-war days by the Remount staff—simply the work was left undone; but when the time of stress came, there came the inevitable breakdown, so that the Government was forced to fall upon the defence that the Department was not constructed to meet the pressure put upon it during the war. But the Englishman, whom this unreadiness has cost so dear, will want to know why the Department was not so constructed as to be ready to deal with emergencies.

Nor is it only of under-organisation that this complaint has to be made. Such organisation as there was was inefficient. The Department should be a storehouse of information. From what I have already written about the lack of information concerning horses in Hungary, it will be seen that the War Office might be described as anything rather than a storehouse of information. But let me give one more instance. Major Rasch asked, in the House of Commons, of the Secretary of State for War, whether a contract for a supply of mules was made at the price of £35 each at the same time that, according to documentary evidence from officers of the Remount Department of the Natal Field Force, the market price was only £25, and the actual value about £15. Mr. Brodrick brought out the stereotyped reply: "There is no information on this subject at the War Office."

And what little knowledge the War Office possessed it cherished, quite unnecessarily, as secret. When Mr. Dillon asked what price had been given for the Argentine horses, he was told that this was a trade secret. Now, horses are not bought in huge quantities without people concerned finding out what is paid for them. Wider publicity would, if the price were too high, increase the chances of competitive offers at lower rates; and if the prices were not too high, no possible harm could follow by making them generally known.

The scandals of the Remount Department

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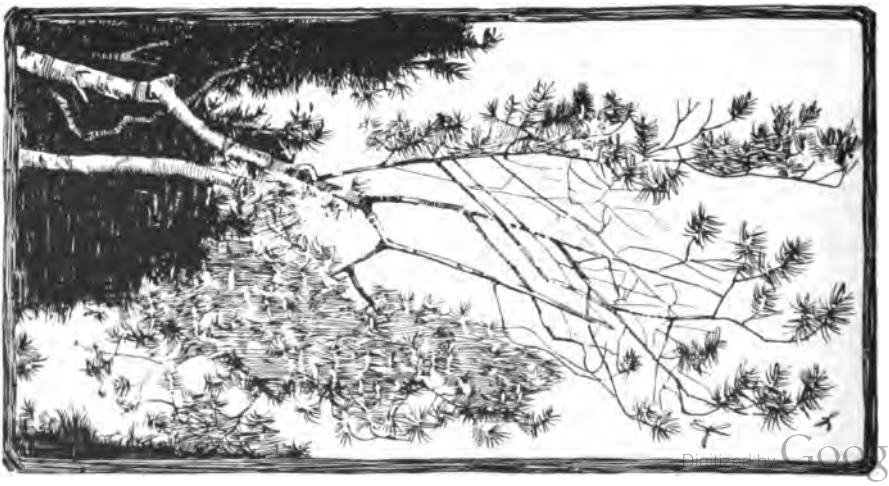
prove but too clearly the wisdom of Sir Blundell Maple's suggestion that a Commercial Board should be appointed at the War Office to deal with all contracts. And I would add, not simply to deal with contracts, but to assist in organising all the commercial work of the Office upon a business-like basis. It is not for me to suggest exactly how the Remount Department and its methods should be organised — that is for soldiers and horsemen — though I would suggest that soldiers and horsemen, having both made such a mess of the work in the past, should take business men into their counsel; and they might consider the suggestions which have been made by Sir Blundell Maple and others for buying young horses and re-selling them at a later period if they are not wanted, or for subsidising horse-breeding upon such a scale as would ensure a good home and colonial supply, and avoid future payments of extravagant sums to foreigners.

I have dealt at length with this Remount question because it is symptomatic and illustrative. It was all very well to adopt the line taken by Lord Morley in defending the Government in the House of Lords, when he asked: "Was it fair to assume that the revelations as to the Remounts were only the lifting of a corner of the curtain which concealed the utter want of business-like administrative capacity on the part of the Government?" and to assert that such an assumption "was generalising in a very general and hasty way." This will not be the public view. It is difficult to get at the facts in many matters pertaining to Government work. Ministers and officials themselves take care of that with their policy of secrecy. But they must court publicity, and not struggle against it, if they wish the public to believe that such scandals as have been discovered are the only scandals that exist. The Remount scandals do not stand alone, even among the instances of waste and lack of business which the recent war has brought to light. At the very time the Government apologists were trying to get the public to believe that the Remount scandal did stand alone, the facts concerning the Meat Contracts were being dragged into light—and how scandalous they were I have already related. And though I cannot hope to make a complete record of all the waste of public money which is being perpetrated, I have yet some more instances to bring to your notice. They will form cumulative and presumptive proof of "the utter want of business-like administrative capacity on the part of the Government."

It cannot be contended that these administrative scandals are a temporary incident. Let us accept as evidence of their persistent character Mr. Brodrick's defence against the charges arising out of the South African scandals: "I was at the War Office after the war of '82-3-4. That was a small war, only 30,000 men being engaged in it. But there were ten times as many scandals connected with that war than there have been with this war!"

(*The "text" for the third article in this series will be "Cordite and Expensive Favouritism."*)



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UNSOLVED.

By IAN MACLAREN.*

No. II.—AN UNHISTORICAL TRAGEDY.

AS the minister had suggested the idea of every man in the party telling an incident in his life which could not be explained on natural grounds, it was inevitable that he should lead the way, but on the second evening there was much hesitation who should follow him. One asked to be excused because he was the youngest, and it would not be respectful to precede his elders, and another because he believed he was the eldest, and the young fellows went first nowadays; another because he had nothing worth telling, and a fourth because he wanted to think over what he had to tell, till at last the Indian soldier took his courage in both his hands. He wished us to understand that a man who had been fighting twenty years in frontier wars, where you never knew when you might have to turn out and hunt a mountain tribe, had no time for literature, and that he could not pretend to tell his yarn like a writing-man; but what he had to say was what had happened, and as it was still fresh in his experience, he was sure of every detail. And we assured him that what we wanted was not eloquent fiction, but plain, downright fact—at least, what seemed fact to each man, for we were careful to distinguish between what really had been and what was our impression.

"When I came home last spring," he began, "after twenty years' thief-hunting in the Indian Highlands, I did not expect any of the friends of former days to remember me, for that kind of work doesn't leave you much time for correspondence; but some of them had seen an absurd paragraph in the papers which gave me credit for a lot of work done by other men, and so among other letters waiting for me on my arrival was one from Jack Stuart. Jack went into the Black Watch when I, for pecuniary reasons, as well as an unholy thirst for fighting, entered the Indian Army, where, if one is lucky, a fellow can fight from January to December for a quarter of a century, and only one skirmish out of a hundred be heard of at home. A few years afterwards Jack succeeded to his father's estate, and laid claim to an extinct peerage of extreme antiquity, and having proved his case, became Baron Clunas. He now insisted that I should go down at once and resume the habits of civilised life, as he put it, in Clunas Castle, and in the society of his wife, who, he declared—being always a smooth-spoken Highlandman—was dying to see me. He also promised, with a pretty sharp remembrance of past days, that if any old fool proposed to associate my name with the toast of the Army and Navy, he would put him in the guard-room, and that no person at Clunas would make the remotest reference to that confounded Victoria Cross. And upon those reasonable terms, because my heart was warm to old Jack, because I wanted to see how he looked as a Peer of Scotland—and it may be of the United Kingdom, for all I know—I packed up my home-kit, and after a first-rate journey in the good West Coast Express, reached Auchterlonie Junction at 6 p.m., two minutes before time, which was first-rate going. Jack was waiting on the platform, and I knew his old face at once, although he was stouter than he used to be, and looking, as the Scots folk say, "more responsible." No wonder! For he's Lord-Lieutenant of his county now, and they say—but you fellows know more than I do about that—will be in the next Government. He was in great order, and nearly reduced my hand to a pulp, declaring that he hadn't been as happy since the day he was married, that there wasn't a bit of difference upon me after twenty years' campaigning, and all that sort of nonsense; but all the same, it was pleasant to hear, for there are no friends like the old friends. And it wasn't half bad, either, to drive with Jack that June evening along the quiet country road and through the bonny green fields, and then up the avenue of arching beech-trees, and to find oneself welcomed by a gracious woman in a Scots home of the ancient time.

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"First of all, I must have tea; and I can tell you tea from a woman's hand in a Christian home, where you can go to sleep without your revolver close to your hand, makes a man 'feel good,' as the Americans say, after he's been living in tents and barracks for twenty years, sometimes not taking off his clothes for a week on end. While at tea, Lady Clunas told me that they had had rather a calamity at the Castle, and almost thought they ought to wire to me not to come. Some children had arrived a few days before, to spend a week or two with the younger members of the family, and now the whole lot were in for some infectious disease. They didn't know whether it was scarlet fever or chicken-pox, or what it was. They had removed the whole of the young folk to a wing of the Castle, where the guests usually had their rooms, and they were completely shut off; and Lady Clunas hoped that I was not afraid of infection, and that I wouldn't mind not having as good a room as they would have liked to give me. Of course, I assured her that I didn't believe a microbe could get a footing upon such a sun-dried and weather-beaten old fellow as I was; and as regards rooms, if they only saw the places I had slept in, they might be sure any corner that kept out the rain would be luxury to me. I told them that I was awfully glad they had not cancelled their invitation, and so I am to-day, but if you had asked me at 12.30 next morning whether I was comfortable, I tell you I would have exchanged my sleeping quarters in Clunas Castle for the windiest and coldest hillside on the frontier.

After tea, Clunas took me to my room; but I paid little attention to it, except that it was some distance from the heart of the house, and that it was large and old-fashioned. During dinner we talked of old days, what had become of this man and that man, what had happened at home and abroad; we tasted the former jests again and told the familiar stories of the past, and then we drifted to his peerage, and Jack explained that it was as old as the days of Queen Mary, that it had been lost in '45, being attainted for treason, and that everyone had been pleased that his family had got it back again. The Castle had always been in their possession, although most of the land they now possessed had come through a fortunate marriage; but he said the things he valued most of their hereditary possessions were certain relics of Queen Mary which had belonged to a relative when he was a lad, but had recently been left to him. As every man is interested in Mary, even although, like myself, he never reads a book and knows nothing about the controversies that are always going on over her character and doings, my curiosity was at once excited, and I asked what kind of relics. 'All sorts of things,' he said, 'for you must know that the Clunas of that day was Mary's very good friend, and stuck by her through thick and thin, and it is said did some very curious things for her. Would you care to see them?' Jack asked.

"We were sitting at the time in his sanctum, which was half library, half smoking-room, where he kept his special possessions and did all his business. He rose and crossed to a recess, where he opened a heavy oak door and then showed me a safe built into the wall. 'As the things are rather valuable on account of their antiquity, we keep them locked up.' Opening the safe door with a key which he carried in his pocket, he lifted out a box bound with iron, and opened it with another key which he took from a private drawer in his writing-table. Then he laid the contents upon the table, and though I am not romantic or any of that kind of thing, I felt as if I were in the presence of Queen Mary. There was a ciborium, described in an old catalogue: 'ane Lawer with a cowp and a cover of copper ennamallit, engraved with Old Testament subjects.' There was a locket formed of a cameo having on one side a representation of the Crucifixion, and on the other the Scourging of Christ, set in a gold frame with an agate cover; this locket was attached to a necklace of twenty pieces of agate all mounted in gold. There was also a hand-bell which was used by the Queen during her captivity, with the Royal Arms of Scotland upon it, and the monogram for Francis and Mary; and there was also a covered tankard of agate, having on the handle a lion's head and a rose. One forgot the centuries between and saw Mary sitting at the high table in Holyrood with the ciborium before her, or dancing at a ball in the palace and wearing the necklace of agates, or sitting alone in Lochleven Castle, then wearying for someone's company, and ringing the hand-bell. As I held the necklace in my hand, I wondered, as many men have done, whether all the stories told about her were true or not; whether she had anything to do with the murder of her husband; whether, in fact, she was a beautiful, unscrupulous, treacherous woman, or the saint that her friends would have her to be, or

whether she was, after all, just like other people, half sinner and half saint, and much sinned against.

"'Interesting, rather,' said Jack. 'Why, if one were a magician, or even a spiritualist, I suppose, with that necklace in his hand, he could summon up Queen Mary some night and repeat the scenes of long ago. One could correct the historians then and pick up lots of incidents that have been forgotten. She must have turned many a man's head

"'If you play any longer with that dagger, old man, you'll be having nightmare.'"

that we never heard of, I daresay,' added Jack, 'and been in many a man's power whom she wanted to get rid of.' As he spoke, he took up the only other article in the box and held it in his hand. It was a dagger with a short, strong handle made of silver, and a long, thin, steel blade of fine temper, and whose point was still keen. 'Is that another of the Queen's possessions?' I asked. 'It's a vicious-looking thing, and might very well have put the fear of death on Darnley. She was just the young woman, I suspect, to finger either the necklace or the dagger as suited her mood at the time. Has it any story attached to it?' 'Well,' said Clunas, 'there is a yarn about the thing which came rambling down from one person to another, till one of our people a century ago put it into writing. It isn't much, after all, and there may not be a word of truth in it, but its very existence shows the kind of thing that went on in those days at Holyrood. More Frenchmen than Chatelar were in love with Mary Stuart, and, if it be not blasphemy against our fair Queen, some of them were said to have been more fortunate. According to the story—but I only give it,' Clunas added, 'for what it's worth, and that, I dare say, is nothing—a French lord got this necklace as a pledge of love from Mary, and then he must needs talk of it, and there was black trouble in Holyrood. One night, drinking in a tavern, he boasted to Lord Seton of the necklace, and Seton gave him the lie direct, saying that he never had any such gift from the Queen, and that he was nothing but a liar. Whereupon it was agreed, before they parted, that Seton and the French lord should meet in duel in the Queen's park early next morning, and that the French lord should bring the necklace with him to prove that he had not lied. But Seton left declaring that no necklace would ever be seen, that therefore he would need no rapier for the French lord, but that he would beat him with a dog-whip as a slanderer of the Queen. That night the Frenchman was stabbed to death in his bed within Holyrood, and the next day, when some rumour of the tavern quarrel went round the Court, the Queen laughed with scorn and said that the French lords forgot themselves; and as she laughed,

the courtiers saw the necklace around her neck. No one knew who had stabbed the French lord, and no one could speak true about the necklace; but this is certain, the Queen gave the necklace, before she went to England, to the Clunas of that day, and this dagger came down with it. I yield to no man,' concluded Jack, 'in admiration for Mary's beauty and her cleverness; but I rather think that the trimmie had the blood of more men upon her conscience than history ever tells.' As we smoked, I took up the necklace in one hand and I held the dagger in the other, and I declare—of course, I ought to mention this, for it may bear on what happened — it seemed to me as if they were linked together, the murderous blade that may have let out many a man's life and the ornament for a queen's neck, with its sacred scenes carved in the locket, just as I've read somewhere that in those days religion and crime and intrigue and murder were all tied up together.

"'If you play any longer with that dagger, old man,' said Clunas, 'you'll be having nightmare. I think we had better lock the gruesome thing up along with the trinkets and turn in, for you've had a long journey, and twenty years without a decent sleep.' So he placed the relics in the box, shut it up in the safe, and started to convey me to my bedroom. It was then, and not before, that I noticed how far the room was from the other quarters of the Castle. It was reached by a long passage with a stone floor, which seemed to pass through a region of rooms stored with books, antiquities, and the general wreckage of centuries, which for some reason or other was preserved—very likely because no successor cared to dispose of an accumulation which contained the history of his family.

"I looked below the bed."

We looked into one or two of the rooms, and when I reached my bedroom I had an impression of having travelled back three centuries and being in the middle of the sixteenth. The room itself required no apology from my host, for it was large and high, and I had noticed that its two windows

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looked out upon a beautiful stretch of green and trees. Its furniture, I could see at a glance, belonged to the days of long ago, and would have fetched a large sum in a London auction-room from the people who ransack the country for old oak and the fashions of the past. With the exception of a modern armchair drawn near to the fire—for even in early summer a fire is welcome at Clunas Castle—and the sitz-bath in a corner of the room, and my things laid out on the dressing-table, there was nothing modern in my bedroom. Every bit of furniture looked as if it had a history and deserved special study; but the chief features of the room were the bed and a huge cabinet. The bed was of enormous size, and I judged must measure eight feet by six at least. It was, indeed, so enormous that I chaffed my host about it.

"'Well, if I have to make up twenty years' arrears of decent Christian sleep, you have fairly equipped me for the task. Why, man, that bed would hold three people, one way; and if they chose to sleep across the bed, there would be room for four. Where did this gorgeous ark come out of?'

"'They say, if you must have it, that it started its history in Holyrood Palace, and that the curtains were embroidered by Mary's own hand. They are certainly very much like some work of hers which we possess; but then it has always been a joke in our family that everything ought to be assigned to Mary; till at last one of my boys persuaded an English visitor, who was quite gone on Mary, that the new billiard-table which had just come down from London was one on which Mary and Darnley had played a famous match with Knox and Moray. We had better call the embroidery "of the school of Mary," just as they palm off doubtful Italian pictures with the name of Da Vinci. One thing, however, you may depend on, if it's any pleasure to you—the bed is of the sixteenth century and once was in a room at Holyrood.'

"'And this magnificent cabinet—for it would be a shame to call it wardrobe—did Queen Mary keep her dresses in it, or was it honoured with her library? It was fit to hold her jewels. What a magnificent piece of work! I suppose the doors open?' For the front consisted of two great carved doors with a canopy above.

"'It is rather a fine piece of furniture,' Jack said indifferently. 'People that know say the workmanship is perfect. It seems to me rather a gloomy-looking ornament for a bedroom, although I suppose it was used at one time; and it came to us, so the tradition runs, along with the bed. It's not much use now, for there is so little practical accommodation inside, and the doors are so heavy to work, that it's never opened; and as this room is very rarely used, and never by women, you will see a wardrobe has been rigged up in that recess with curtains. Just as I thought—it's locked; so that if there's any restless person of the sixteenth century inside, he's safely locked up for the night. Well, I hope you have everything and that you'll be comfortable. I'm only sorry that you're not in brighter quarters; but if there's anyone can hold an outpost, they say you're the man.'

"I closed the door after him. I heard him tramp along the stone passage, where he closed one or two doors of rooms which we had left open, and then I heard the big door shut that cut off the wing from the centre of the Castle, and I was in solitary possession of the whole place.

"It was only a quarter past eleven, and from eleven to twelve in an English bedroom, except in the height of summer, is one of the most pleasant experiences of the day, especially to a man who has been for years out of his country. What I generally do is to get into my easiest coat and softest shoes, to pull the most comfortable chair opposite the fire, and to settle down for an hour's reading with the most interesting book I can lay my hands on in the house. This is a reward for a day's work or twenty years' exile; for there are no bedrooms anywhere like the ones in England—and, of course, I mean Scotland also, for it seems to me quite childish to be obliged to talk of Great Britain and Ireland when you mean the home country. As regards the furniture of the room, I honestly confess I never examine it. If there's a good hard bed and a good soft chair, plenty of water and a glass to shave by, with a peg or two for your kit, I ask no more and don't care what else is in the room.

"That night, however—and I am keeping the bargain about telling everything—I did not sit down at least for a quarter of an hour in the armchair, and partly because—well, I may at once admit it—I felt doubtful about that room, and thought I had better make a reconnaissance just to make sure that there were no Afridis, either Indian or Scots, in the brushwood. First of all I satisfied myself that the black wardrobe was really locked, and about that there could

be no question. I then explored the recesses of the room, where there were one or two little cabinets which were empty, and, indeed, could not have held anything larger than a cat, and finally I gave my attention to the bed. The bedding was all modern, I was glad to find, with a good stiff mattress which must have been made by special order. I studied the embroidery with a candle, and imagined the fingers that worked on the now faded silk, and the face that bent over it—beautiful, of course—in fact, grew quite poetical. And then—you see, I am making a clean breast of everything, and—you fellows needn't laugh—I looked below the bed.

"Of course, I know that the great difference between the two sexes is that a woman always looks below the bed in her room, and that a man never dreams of doing such a thing. As I am not married, I suppose that is true about women; but I can swear that it was the first time I had ever looked below a bed before getting in.

"There could be no doubt that I had the room to myself, or, at least, that if there was anyone in the room, he was safely secured; and then I sat down to read 'John Inglesant.' It seems to me, though I don't pretend to be a judge of books, awfully well done, and to make the old days of the seventeenth century quite real, even to a man who doesn't know much about it; but I could not get into the spirit of the book, even although I established the chair where I could see the whole room, laughing at myself as an old fool, and chaffing myself for imagining that I was once more on watch for the enemy. So I closed the book, undressed, and got into bed; but there was something on my nerves, and I placed my revolver within reach. The bed was so huge that I could not make up my mind where to sleep in it, and finally—I wish you to remember this, for the arrangement explains the situation—as I do not use a bolster and pillow, being accustomed, as you can understand, to sleep with a low head, I removed the bolster and divided as it were the bed with it, so that it was as if two people were sleeping in it side by side. Then I put a pillow under my head, and as the firelight played upon the embroidery of the curtains and the carved work of the cabinet, I fell a-speculating how many persons had slept in that bed, and how many had died in it; and then I wondered whether anyone had been murdered in it; and then at last the silk roses on the curtains and the black oak-heads on the wardrobe got mixed up together, and I began to talk in a friendly way with Queen Mary, and she asked me questions about the frontier, and I offered her 'John Inglesant' to read, and so I fell asleep.

"I had not slept long, perhaps half-an-hour—it could not have been much past twelve o'clock when I woke, for the fire was still burning and one could still see things in the room. What made me wake, as I consider, was the creaking of a door, and I turned my eyes at once to the cabinet. As I looked, one of the doors seemed to shake as if it were moved from behind; but I said to myself that this was only the effect of the light of the fire shimmering on its face. Then I heard it distinctly creak, as if its lower edge were rasping over wood. The other door began to move, and I sat up in bed. Was there someone concealed in that mysterious piece of furniture, and was I, after all my Indian fighting, to be now a party in a burglary squabble? or—and the past took hold upon me. Another creak, and the two doors were distinctly coming out. Whatever be the cause, the cabinet will soon reveal itself, and it would just be as well to be prepared. I reached out my hand for the revolver. The door nearest me was now clear of the woodwork and began slowly to turn out, and I threw off the bedclothes. The other door swung itself clear with a further creak and also turned outwards. Perhaps, after all, they had never been locked, and heat plays curious tricks with furniture, making it speak and opening its doors; but it would be just as well to take no chances. It seemed to me that now, if it were simply that the temperature had cooled, and the doors, which had expanded in the heat, had now contracted, and were opening of their own accord, they ought to swing more quickly; while they were being opened gently and stealthily, as if someone were behind them, but did not wish his presence to be known. Besides, had not the cabinet been locked? Altogether, it was only wise to be on guard, and I quietly slipped out of the bed on the side further from the wardrobe, and from the shadow in the distant corner of the room, with revolver in hand, watched events. I'll trouble you for a match; this cheroot has gone out. Thanks! Oh, it's drawing quite well. Where was I? Oh, yes. Rather absurd, wasn't it, to be watching an old wardrobe in the nineteenth century as if you expected a ghost? and, of course, I know you'll say all the time it was a dream.

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"The light shone on the dagger which I had seen that evening."

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"Well, to go on, and to describe what, at any rate, I believe I saw, the two doors were still being quietly and, as I would put it, carefully opened—and was that a hand? Almost unconsciously I felt, just to be sure, that my revolver was in working order. Yes, the light could not have created those four white fingers—their whiteness impressed me at the moment, and—you know how quickly the brain works—suggested the hand of a gentleman. I knew this was not a burglar—and yet? The doors were now more than half open, and in the recess of the cabinet I could indistinctly trace the outline of a figure, but not in our dress. Still they are opening and are now three-quarters back, and without doubt, half standing, half crouching, there is a man within the cabinet who is pushing the doors open with great caution. As one of them is now between the interior of the cabinet and the light of the fire, I could see nothing more but that he was there, and that he was stirring as if about to make his exit. First I saw his foot come out and descend to the floor, for the cabinet was raised above a foot from the level of the floor. I saw his leg to the knee, and recognised the dress of the sixteenth century, and, so far as I could tell, that of a nobleman. Then the blackness turned into a cloak, the other foot appeared, and the figure was now in the shadow made by the open door. The face I could not see because of the shadow, and because of what seemed to me to be a velvet bonnet brought down low on the forehead, while the left hand of the figure raised a cloak and covered the lower part of the face, but the right hand seemed to be free.

"I was now convinced either that I was the subject of a fool's trick, which was impossible, or that—and there one must leave it. I felt a drop of perspiration trickle down my forehead and fall on the back of the hand which held the revolver. The figure crept forward in a crouching attitude and now was clear of the door, but even out of the shadow I could see nothing of the face except a whiteness and two eyes, partly because the light was faint, but chiefly because of the bonnet and the cloak. It crept to the bedside, while I—well, I raised the revolver to defend myself, and yet with a curious double sense that a revolver was a useless thing, being three centuries out of date. The figure now is at the bedside and seems to be searching, as one looks for a place to strike; and then suddenly I saw the right hand, which before I had only noticed in the cloak, lifted, and the light shone on the dagger which I had seen that evening in the box. Then the dagger descended with a lightning stroke upon what well might have been the sleeping form of a man on that side of the bed. Once, twice, and then I fired. Even as I aimed and pulled the trigger, I knew it was no use, but it was all that I could do, and—I must do something, after which I suppose I fainted. And that I had never done in my life before.

"When I came to myself, it was three o'clock and the room was full of light. I was lying in the corner where I had been standing, and the revolver was by my side. My first glance was at the bed, where I saw the clothes flung back as I had left them. With an effort I rose till I could see across the bed to the cabinet. The doors were closed, and it looked as it had done when I entered the room. There was no trace of any disturbance, and when I examined the bolster there was no dagger mark. Had it been all a dream? And perhaps I would have come to that conclusion had it not been that one chamber of the revolver was empty, and that I must have fainted in that corner.

"Next morning, to satisfy myself, and on the excuse of interest in the cabinet, I got Clunas to hunt about until a key was found that would open it. Of course it was empty, but in the back of it there was the hole, which I only detected, made by a revolver bullet which had passed through the wood and lodged in the wall behind. Yes, I slept for four nights afterwards in that room, but I saw nothing more, and all I say about the incident is this, that it would have been better for that French lord either to have had nothing to do with Queen Mary—who was a curse to everyone who loved her—or else never to have slept in a room with a closed oaken cabinet."

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L'ENFANT TERRIBLE.

WIFE: What on earth are you creeping about the floor like that for, James?
JAMES: Hush, my dear! I'm trying to get to bed. If baby *sees* me, I shan't get a wink of sleep all night!

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

THE HYGIENIC YOUNG MAN.

By Di Watt.

HE drew a letter from his pocket, glanced at it, crumpled it, and surreptitiously tried a drop-kick—this was walking down Piccadilly. I wished to buy some silk stockings, cardinal, to match my smart new frock.

"Hold!" he exclaimed; "they will give you blood poisoning, your legs will swell to a tremendous size——" Here, to spare my blushes, I hurriedly ordered black ones. The next item on my list was a tennis-racquet, and we decided to go to a certain shop to get one. He refused to stop the 'bus—

"You are young, healthy, and strong; you should be supple enough to jump on."

I did so, getting my frills hopelessly torn in the effort. There was no room on the outside, and the day was baking, so with a deep and sullen frown he came inside, sat down, and took his hat off.

"Toppers are very unhealthy things," he remarked. His hair, quite guiltless of parting, straggled irregularly over his forehead, and his head presented a somewhat speckled appearance, which fact he proceeded to explain (his voice is a yell—it keeps his lungs healthy): "I never part the hair; it makes a fellow bald, you see." The one thing that troubled him, he went on to explain, was the fact that his hair was scurfy, very much so indeed—had I ever noticed it?

No? He promptly bent it down for my inspection. Could I advise him what to use?

I suggested a much-advertised remedy.

"I never use such unhealthy nostrums," he howled indignantly. Here a timid-looking old lady, who had been regarding us anxiously, made a dive for the door and hurriedly clambered off the 'bus. It was just restarting when this dreadful boy made a wild charge down the centre of the vehicle and tore down the street, clutching in one hand a pair of greasy Suède gloves; hatless and with coat tails flying, he pursued the meek old lady.

"Madam" (we heard him in the 'bus, though he was at least a couple of hundred yards away), "madam, you have taken my stick!"

The old woman clutched all her parcels tightly to her, and without an instant's hesitation shrieked "'Elp!" in a shrill falsetto voice.

Immediately half-a-dozen small boys, twice as many men, and a few dilapidated females gathered round the two.

"'E says I've got 'is stick, but I 'aven't. 'E says I've got 'is stick, but I 'aven't."

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TOO BAD!

"Heard about Archie?"
"No."
"Poor beggah! He's in an awful hole. He had arranged to leave town to-day, and now he can't go. His stupid laundress sent all his pyjamas home *with the crease down the wrong way!*"
"Good gracious!"

"You have," he insisted; "it is hooked in the side of your skirt."

The poor old woman craned her neck round, and there was the stick hooked in a side fold of her old-fashioned skirt.

Seizing the stick, he tore after the fast-retreating 'bus in which I sat clutching his top-hat and convulsed with laughter. Taking a flying leap, he landed in the inside, sat down, and said: "I ought to have had flannels on for a sprint like that; these clothes do not let the perspiration through properly."

Arrived at our shop, I marched straight to the tennis-racquet department, he perforce following meekly, to be told, by a polite young man in a frock-coat, that all the "Demons" were out of stock; "but we have a very nice racquet here," he went on persuasively. "No!" ejaculated my friend fiercely, "nothing but a 'Demon' has the right balance." Seizing up the racquet, he swung it round his head, catching the globe of the electric light a fearful crash, of which he took not the slightest notice. Everyone else, on the other hand, instantly concentrated their attention on him, while the manager, a short, puffy little man, hurried up to expostulate; but by this time my young friend had completely forgotten his surroundings and was using the racquet as a club, wildly whirling it round his head, explaining at the same time that he did these exercises every morning, in a spare room—stark naked, you know, with the blinds down. At this point he flung the racquet down and said enthusiastically: "You should just see me stripped!"

Here I fled precipitately, and how he pacified the manager, or whether he smashed in his head with the racquet, I do not know; and as my young friend has departed over seas as a missionary to the Chinese, I shall probably never know.

THE NEW STORY.

As soon as he emerged from the jasmine-covered portico the man aroused my curiosity. I watched with interest his pensive face lined by some deep sorrow, his long, grey locks, his rounded shoulders, the book beneath his arm, as he slowly approached me down the trim pathway with its sentinel rose trees. I had a vague memory of having seen him somewhere before.

He closed the wicket-gate, by which I stood, and the impulse seized me to question him.

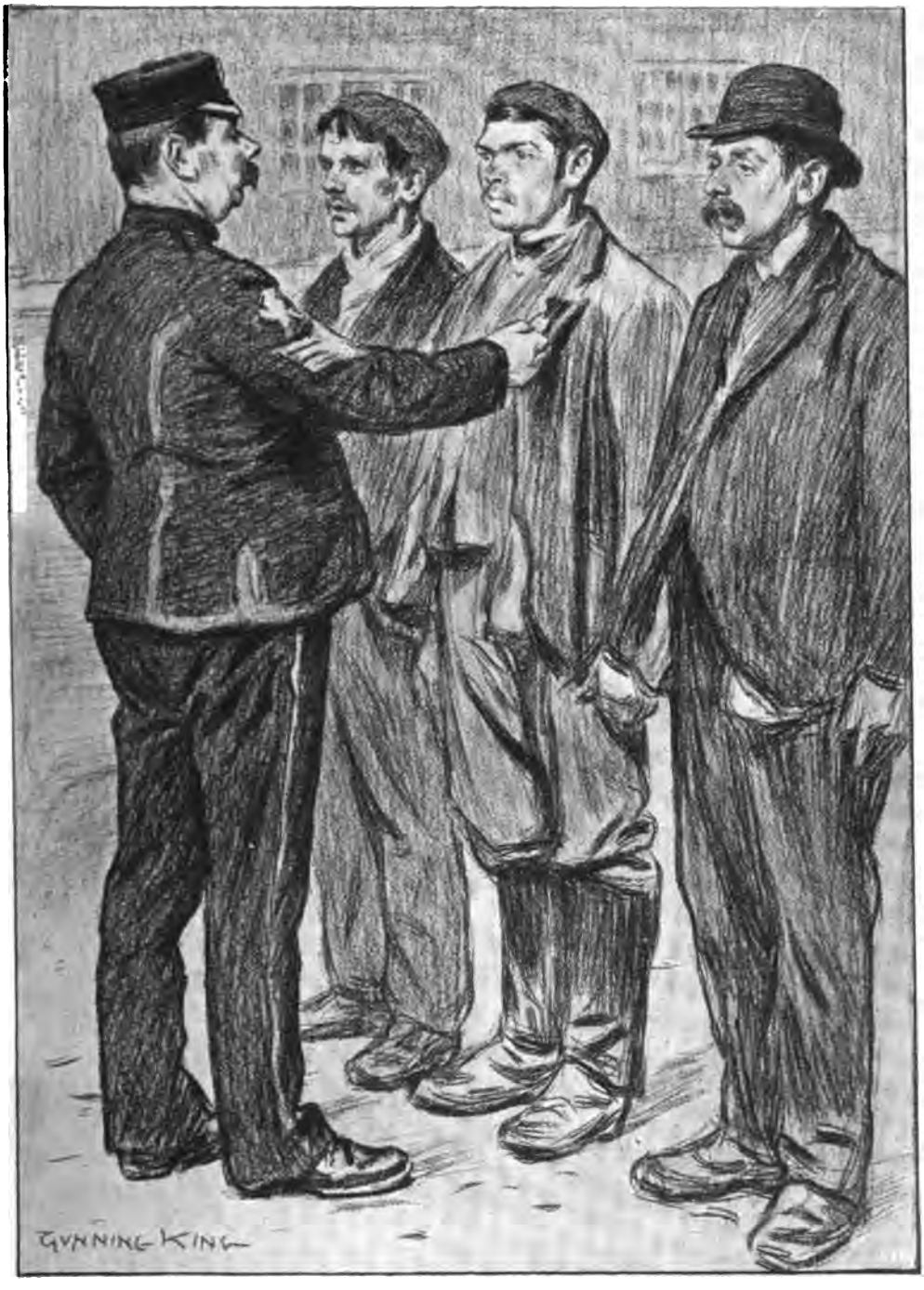
"Excuse me," I said, "but surely we have met before. Are you not the middle-aged Professor—student, at all events—who——"

"Perhaps," he broke in, "you are thinking of one of my brothers, cousins, or great-uncles. We are all very much alike."

"I feel certain I am not mistaken," I proceeded. "You are the man who has grown prematurely old among your instruments or books. In the house there is some typewriter or girl from the foundling hospital or something of the kind. The few worldly women who come to disturb your studies regard her as a minx."

"You seem to know all about it," he said, with a gesture which in one less gentle would have indicated annoyance.

"Of course I do," I said. "But in reality she has a heart of gold. Not that you perceive it—at first. You don't know what is the matter with you. It surprises and irritates you to discover that somehow or other you cannot bestow your concentrated attention on the all-important matter of an emendation in Aristotle or the inside of a



THE BADGE OF HONOUR.

DRILL SERGEANT: What decoration's this you're wearing?
YOKEL: It's the medal wot our cow won at th' show.

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beetle. That is a pretty touch, you know. Then one night the ward, or typewriter, or girl from a foundling hospital, is going to a ball. She comes into your study flushed with excitement in a simple muslin frock."

"Well?" he asked.

"Well," I replied with confidence, "in an instant the veil is torn from your eyes. You perceive that the dishevelled tomboy, or neat amanuensis, as the case may be, has become a 'beautiful woman.'" The man began to dig at the gravelled pathway with his stick. The memory of that moment had disturbed his outward calm. "Then she goes off to the ball with your nephew or the son of your old friend, and you throw aside your Aristotle and think. You can no longer conceal from yourself that this restlessness, this want of concentration, this general disturbance is none other than love. Then, with that naïve modesty which is one of your most charming characteristics, you begin to compare yourself with the dashing young fellow who has just left. You ignore the fact that you, too, have a heart of gold, and a competence of other things in gold besides, and you ask yourself how it is possible for her to so much as compare you with him. Still, you resolve to win her."

The man uttered what I gathered to be a sigh and hacked at some stinging-nettles.

"Yes," I said, reopening the wound as gently as I could, "you resolve to win her and you do."

The man made a movement of despair.

"But," I said, striving to introduce as much gentleness as I could into my accents, "one day, before the marriage, the girl's secret leaks out. It is a sense of duty that drives her to your arms. She loves the other. However, you do not betray your knowledge. You let all the preparations for your new home proceed. Her favourite dimity is hung up. The walls are papered with the trellised paper that she loves. Her canary is caged in the parlour window. Then at the dramatic moment you declare that it is all for them, that you could hold no place in her bright young life—and steal away smiling a benison upon their happiness, but with an aching void in your heart."

I thought that I had gone too far. The man's feelings seemed to have overcome him—but suddenly he was aroused by a voice from the house. It was a raucous, nagging, female voice, and its owner, fat, florid, and overdressed, appeared beneath the jasmined porch. Something about her seemed familiar.

"Peter!" she shouted imperiously.

The old man looked timorously round and whispered in my ear: "S'sh! you're all wrong," he said; "I *married* her."

Harold White.

"A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE——"

OLD LADY (improving the occasion): You know, boys, it's only the body which lies here. Now, what is it goes to heaven?

SMALL BOY (tentatively): 'Is 'ead, mum.

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THE ARRIVAL.

From a Picture by Lucien Davis, R.I.

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A COMPLETE LONG STORY BY THE FAMOUS BAND-KING.

THE FIFTH STRING.

By JOHN PHILIP SOUSA.*

COMING of Diotti to America had awakened more than usual interest in the man and his work. His marvellous success as violinist in the leading capitals of Europe, together with many brilliant contributions to the literature of his instrument, had long been favourably commented on by the critics of the old world. Many stories of his struggles and his triumphs had found their way across the ocean and had been read and re-read with interest.

Therefore, when Mr. Henry Perkins, the well-known *impresario*, announced with an air of conscious pride and pardonable enthusiasm that he had secured Diotti for a "limited" number of concerts, Perkins's friends assured that wide-awake gentleman that his foresight amounted to positive genius, and they predicted an unparalleled success for his star.

On the night preceding Diotti's *début* in New York, he was the centre of attraction at a reception given by Mrs. Llewellyn, a social leader and a devoted patron of the arts.

During one of those sudden and unexplainable lulls that always occur in general drawing-room conversations, Diotti turned to Mrs. Llewellyn and whispered: "Who is the charming young woman just entering?"

"The beauty in white?"

"Yes, the beauty in white," softly echoing Mrs. Llewellyn's query. He leaned forward and with eager eyes gazed in admiration at the new-comer.

"That is Miss Wallace—Miss Mildred Wallace, only child of one of New York's prominent bankers."

"She is beautiful—a queen by divine right!" cried he, and then, with a mingling of impetuosity and importunity, entreated his hostess to present him.

And thus they met.

Miss Wallace and Diotti had wandered into the conservatory.

"A desire for happiness is our common heritage," he was saying in his richly melodious voice.

"But to define what constitutes happiness is very difficult," she replied.

"Not necessarily," he went on. "If the motive is clearly within our grasp, the attainment is possible."

"For example?" she asked.

"The miser is happy when he hoards his gold; the philanthropist when he distributes his. The attainment is identical, but the motives are antipodal."

"Then one possessing sufficient motives could be happy without end?" she suggested doubtingly.

"That is my theory. The Niobe of old had happiness within her power."

"The gods thought not," said she. "In their very pity they changed her into stone, and with streaming eyes she ever tells the story of her sorrow."

"But are her children weeping?" he asked. "I think not. Happiness can bloom from the seeds of deepest woe."

"Still, Fate can rob us of our patrimony," she replied after a pause.

"Not while life is here and eternity beyond," he said reassuringly.

"What if a soul lies dormant and will not arouse?" she asked.

"There are souls that have no motive low enough for earth, but only high enough for heaven," he said, with evident intention, looking almost directly at her.

"Then one must come who speaks in Nature's tongue," she continued.

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"And the soul will then awake," he added earnestly.

"But is there such a one?" she asked. "I am afraid not. I studied drawing, worked diligently and, I hope, intelligently, and yet I was quickly convinced that a counterfeit presentment of Nature was puny and insignificant. I painted Niagara. My friends praised my effort. I saw Niagara again—I destroyed the picture."

"Still, man has won the admiration of man by his achievements," he said.

"Alas for me!" she sighed, "I have not felt it."

"Surely you have been stirred by the wonders man has accomplished in music's realm?" Diotti ventured.

"I never have been." She spoke sadly and reflectively.

"But does not the passion-laden theme of a master, or the marvellous feeling of a player, awaken your emotions?" persisted he.

She stood leaning lightly against a pillar by the fountain. "I never hear a pianist, however great and famous, but I see the little cream-coloured hammers within the piano bobbing up and down like acrobatic brownies. I never hear the plaudits of the crowd for the artist and watch him return to bow his thanks, but I mentally demand that these little acrobats, each resting on an individual pedestal, and weary from his efforts, shall appear to receive a share of the applause.

"When I listen to a great singer," continued this world-defying sceptic, "trilling like a thrush, scampering over the scales, I see a clumsy lot of ah, ah, ahs, awkwardly, uncertainly ambling up the gamut, saying: 'Were it not for us, she could not sing thus. Give us our meed of praise.'"

Slowly he replied: "Masters have written in wondrous language, and masters have played with wondrous power."

"And I so long to hear," she said almost plaintively. "I marvel at the invention of the composer and the skill of the player, but there I cease."

He looked at her intently. She was standing before him, not a block of chiseled ice, but a beautiful, breathing woman. He offered her his arm, and together they made their way to the drawing-room.

"Perhaps, some day, one will come who can sing a song of perfect love in perfect tones, and your soul will be attuned to his melody."

"Perhaps—and good-night," she softly said.

II.

On the evening of December the 12th, Diotti made his initial bow in New York to an audience that completely filled every available space in the Academy of Music—a representative audience, distinguished alike for beauty, wealth, and discernment.

When the violinist appeared for his solo, he quietly acknowledged the cordial reception of the audience and immediately proceeded with the business of the evening. At a slight nod from him, the conductor rapped attention, then launched the orchestra into the introduction of the concerto, Diotti's favourite, selected for the first number. As the violinist turned to the conductor, he faced slightly to the left and in a direct line with the second proscenium box. His pose was admirable. He was handsome, with the olive-tinted warmth of his Southern home—fairly tall, straight-limbed and lithe—a picture of poetic grace. His was the face of a man who trusted with reserve, the manner of one who believed implicitly, feeling that good was universal and evil accidental.

As the music grew louder and the orchestra approached the peroration of the preface of the coming solo, the violinist raised his head slowly. Suddenly his eyes met the gaze of the solitary occupant of the second proscenium box. His face flushed. He looked inquiringly, almost appealingly, at her. She sat immovable and serene, a lace-framed vision in white.

It was she who, since he had met her, only the night before, held his very soul in thraldom.

He lifted his bow, tenderly placing it on the strings. Faintly came the first measures of the theme. The melody, noble, limpid and beautiful, floated in dreamy sway over the vast auditorium and seemed to cast a mystic glamour over the player. As the final note of the first movement was dying away, the audience, awakening from its delicious trance, broke forth into spontaneous bravos.

Mildred Wallace, scrutinising the programme, merely drew her wrap closer about her shoulders and sat more erect. At the end of the concerto the applause was generous enough to satisfy the most exacting *virtuoso*. Diotti unquestionably had scored the greatest triumph of his career. But the lady in the box had remained silent and unaffected throughout.

The poor fellow had seen only her during the time he played, and the mighty cheers

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"'I see the little cream-coloured hammers bobbing up and down.'"

that came from floor and galleries struck upon his ear like the echoes of mocking demons. Leaving the stage, he hurried to his dressing-room and sank into a chair. He had persuaded himself she should not be insensible to his genius; but the dying ashes of his hopes, his dreams, were smouldering, and in his despair came the thought: "I

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am not great enough for her. I am but a man; her consort should be a god. Her soul, untouched by human passion or human skill, demands the power of godlike genius to arouse it."

Music-lovers crowded into his dressing-room, enthusiastic in their praises. Cards conveying delicate compliments written in delicate chirography poured in upon him, but in vain he looked for some sign, some word from her.

Quickly he left the theatre and sought his hotel. He threw himself upon the bed and almost sobbed his thoughts, and their burden was—

"I am not great enough for her. I am but a man. I am but a man!"

III.

THE violinist had made a great hit, yet when Perkins entered Diotti's room, he found the violinist heavy-eyed and dejected. "My dear Signor," he began, showing a large envelope bulging with newspaper clippings, "I have brought the notices. They are quite the limit, I assure you. Nothing like them ever heard before. Passed the box-office coming up; nothing left but a few seats in the top gallery. We'll stand them on their heads to-morrow night—see if we don't." Then he handed the bursting envelope of notices to Diotti, who listlessly put them on the table at his side.

"Too tired to read, eh?" said Perkins, and then, with the advance-agent instinct strong within him, he selected a clipping and touching the violinist on the shoulder: "Let me read this one to you. It is by Herr Totenkellar. He is a hard nut to crack, but he did himself proud this time. Great critic when he wants to be."

Perkins cleared his throat and began: "'Diotti combines tremendous feeling with equally tremendous technique. The entire audience was under the witchery of his art.'" Diotti slowly negatived that statement with bowed head. "'His tone is full, round, and clear; his interpretation lends a story-telling charm to the music; for, while we drank deep at the fountain of exquisite melody, we saw sparkling within the waters the lights of Paradise. New York never has heard his equal. He stands alone, pre-eminent, an artistic giant.'"

"Now, that's what I call great," said the *impresario* dramatically. "When you hit Totenkellar that way, you are good for all kinds of money."

Perkins took his hat and cane and moved towards the door. The violinist arose and extended his hand wearily. "Good-day" came simultaneously; then: "I'm off. We'll turn 'em away to-morrow; see if we don't!"

IV.

IT was the evening of the 14th, and there was the largest crowd in the history of the Academy. Every seat was occupied, every foot of standing room taken. Chairs were placed in the side aisles. The programmes announced that it was the second appearance in America of Angelo Diotti, the renowned Tuscan violinist.

The orchestra had perfunctorily ground out the overture to "Der Freischütz," the baritone had stentorianly emitted "Dio Possente," the soprano was working her way through the closing measures of the mad scene from "Lucia," and Diotti was number four on the programme. The conductor stood beside his platform, ready to ascend as Diotti appeared.

The audience, ever ready to act when those on the stage cease that occupation, gave a splendid imitation of the historic last scene at the Tower of Babel. Having accomplished this to its evident satisfaction, the audience proceeded, like the closing phrase of the "Götterdämmerung" Dead March, to become exceedingly quiet—then expectant.

This expectancy lasted fully three minutes. Then there were some impatient hand-clappings. A few persons whispered: "Why is he late?" "Why doesn't he come?" "I wonder where Diotto is?" and then came unmistakable signs of impatience. At its height Perkins appeared hesitatingly. Nervous and jerky he walked to the centre of the stage and raised his hand, begging silence. The audience was stilled.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he falteringly said, "Signor Diotti left his hotel at seven o'clock and was driven to the Academy. The call-boy rapped at his dressing-room, and not receiving a reply, opened the door, to find the room empty. We have despatched searchers in every direction and have sent out a police alarm. We fear some accident has befallen the Signor. We ask your indulgence for the keen disappointment, and beg to say that your money will be refunded at the box-office."

Diotti had disappeared as completely as though the earth had swallowed him.

V.

"MY DEAREST SISTER,—You doubtless were exceedingly mystified and troubled over the

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report that was flashed to Europe regarding my sudden disappearance on the eve of my second concert in New York.

"Fearing, sweet Francesca, that you might mourn me as dead, I sent the cablegram you received some weeks since, telling you to be of good heart and await my letter. To make my action thoroughly understood, I must give you a record of what happened to me from the first day I arrived in America. I found a great interest manifested in my *première*, and socially everything was done to make me happy.

"Mrs. James Llewellyn, whom, you no doubt remember, we met in Florence the winter of 18—, immediately after I reached New York arranged a reception for me which was elegant in the extreme. But from that night dates my misery.

"You ask her name?—Mildred Wallace. 'Tell me what she is like,' I hear you say. Of graceful height, willowy and exquisitely moulded, not over twenty-four, with the face of a Madonna; wondrous eyes of darkest blue, hair indescribable in its maze of tawny colour—in a word, the perfection of womanhood. In half an hour I was her abject slave and proud in my serfdom. When I returned to the hotel that evening, I could not sleep. Her image ever was before me, elusive and shadowy. And yet we seemed to grow farther and farther apart—she near heaven, I nearer earth.

"The next evening I gave my first, and what I fear may prove my last, concert in America. The vision of my dreams was there, radiant in rarest beauty. Singularly enough, she was in the direct line of my vision while I played. I saw only her, played but for her, and cast my soul at her feet. She sat indifferent and silent. 'Cold?' you say. No! No! Francesca, not cold; superior to my poor efforts. I realised my limitations. I questioned my genius. When I returned to bow my acknowledgments for the most generous applause I have ever received, there was no sign on her part that I had interested her, either through my talent or by appeal to her curiosity. I hoped against hope that some word might come from her, but I was doomed to disappointment. The critics were fulsome in their praise, and the public was lavish with its plaudits, but I was abjectly miserable. Another sleepless night, and I was determined to see her. My heart craved one word, however matter-of-fact, that would rekindle the hope that was dying within me.

"Hesitatingly, and like a clumsy yokel, I blurted: 'I have been wondering whether you cared for the performance I gave?'

"'It certainly ought to make little difference to you,' she replied; 'the public was enthusiastic enough in its endorsement.'

"'But I want your opinion,' I pleaded.

"'My opinion would not at all affect the almost unanimous verdict,' she replied calmly.

"'And,' I urged desperately, 'you were not affected in the least?'

"Very coldly she answered: 'Not in the least'; and then fearlessly, like a princess in the Palace of Truth: 'If ever a man comes who can awaken my heart, frankly and honestly I will confess it.'

"'Perhaps such a one lives,' I said, 'but has yet to reach the height to win you—your——'

"'Speak it,' she said, 'to win my love!'

"'Yes,' I cried, startled at her candour, 'to win your love.' Hope slowly rekindled within my breast, and then with half-closed eyes, and wooingly, she said—

"'No drooping Clytie could be more constant than I to him who strikes the chord that is responsive in my soul.'

"I went out into the gathering gloom. Her words haunted me. A strange feeling came over me. A voice within me cried: 'Do not play to-night. Study! study! Perhaps in the full fruition of your genius your music, like the warm western wind to the harp, may bring life to her soul.'

"I fled, and I am here. I am delving deeper and deeper into the mysteries of my art, and I pray God each hour that He may place within my grasp the wondrous music His blessed angels sing, for the soul of her I love is attuned to the harmonies of heaven.

"Your affectionate brother,

"ANGELO.

"Island of Bahama, January 2."

VI.

WHEN Diotti left New York so precipitately, he took passage on a coast-line steamer sail- for the Bahama Islands. Once there, he leased a small *cay*, one of a group off the mainland, and lived alone and unattended, save for the weekly visits of an old fisherman and his son, who brought supplies of provisions from the town miles away. His dwelling-place, surrounded with palmetto trees, was little more than a rough shelter. Diotti arose at daylight, and after a simple repast, took himself to practice. Hour after hour he would let his muse run riot with his fingers. Lovingly he wooed the strings with

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plaintive song, then conquering and triumphant would be his theme. But neither satisfied him. The vague dream of a melody more beautiful than ever man had heard dwelt hauntingly on the borders of his imagination, but was no nearer realisation than when he began. As the day's work closed, he wearily placed the violin within its case, murmuring: "Not yet, not yet; I have not found it."

Days passed, weeks crept slowly on; still he worked, but always with the same result. One day, feverish and excited, he played on in monotone almost listless. His tired, overwrought brain denied a further thought. His arm and fingers refused response to his will. With an uncontrollable outburst of grief and anger, he dashed the violin to the floor, where it lay a hopeless wreck. Extending his arms, he cried, in the agony of despair: "It is of no use! If the God of Heaven will not aid me, I ask the Prince of Darkness to come!"

A tall, rather spare, but well-made and handsome man appeared at the door of the hut.

"I beg pardon," said the musician, surprised and visibly nettled at the intrusion; and then with forced politeness he asked: "To whom am I indebted for this unexpected visit?"

"Allow me," said the stranger, taking a card from his case and handing it to the musician, who read: "Satan," and in the lower left-hand corner: "Prince of Darkness."

"I am the Prince," said the stranger, bowing low.

There was no hint of the pavement-made ruler in the information he gave, but rather of the desire of one gentleman to set another right at the beginning. The musician assumed a position of open-mouthed wonder, gazing steadily at the visitor.

"Satan?" he whispered hoarsely.

"You need help and advice," said the visitor, his voice sounding like that of a disciple of the healing art.

"No, no!" cried the shuddering violinist; "go away! I do not need you."

"I regret I cannot accept that statement as gospel truth," said Satan sarcastically, "for if ever a man needed help, you are that man."

"But not from you," replied Diotti.

"That statement is discredited also by your outburst of a few moments ago, when you called upon me."

"I do not need you," reiterated the musician. "I will have none of you!" and he waved his arm towards the door, as if he desired the interview to end.

"I came at your behest, actuated entirely by kindness of heart," said Satan.

Diotti laughed derisively, and Satan, showing just the slightest feeling at Diotti's behaviour, said reprovingly: "If you will listen a moment, and not be so rude to an utter stranger, we may reach some conclusion to your benefit."

"Get thee behind——"

"I know exactly what you were about to say. Have no fears on that score. I have no demands to make and no impossible compacts to insist upon."

"I have heard of you before," knowingly spoke the violinist, nodding his head sadly.

"No doubt you have," smilingly. "My reputation, which has suffered at the hands of irresponsible people, is not of the best, and places me at times in awkward positions. But I am beginning to live it down." The stranger looked contrition itself. "To prove my sincerity, I desire to help you win *her love*."

"How can you help me?"

"Very easily. You have been wasting time, energy, and health in a wild desire to play better. The trouble lies not with you."

"Not with me?" interrupted the violinist, now thoroughly interested.

"The trouble lies not with you," repeated the visitor, "but with the miserable violin you have been using and have just destroyed," and he pointed to the shattered instrument.

Tears welled from the poor violinist's eyes as he gazed on the fragments of his beloved violin, the pieces lying scattered about as the result of his unfortunate anger.

"It was a Stradivarius," said Diotti sadly.

"Had it been a Stradivarius, an Amati, or a Guarnerius, or a host of others rolled into one, you would not have found in it the melody to win the heart of the woman you love. Get a better and more suitable instrument."

"Where is one?" earnestly interrogated Diotti, vaguely realising that Satan knew.

"In my possession," Satan replied.

"She would hate me if she knew I had recourse to the powers of darkness to gain her love."

Satan, wincing at this uncomplimentary allusion to himself, replied rather warmly: "My dear sir, were it not for the fact that I

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"The solitary occupant of the second proscenium box."

feel in particularly good spirits this morning, I should resent your ill-timed remarks and leave you to end your miserable existence with rope or pistol," and Satan pantomimed both suicidal contingencies. "Do you want the violin or not?"

"I might look at it," said Diotti, resolving mentally that he could go so far without harm.

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"Very well," said Satan. He gave a long whistle.

An old man, bearing a violin case, came within the room. He bowed to the wondering Diotti and proceeded to open the case. Taking the instrument out, the old man fondled it with loving and tender solicitude, pointing out its many beauties.

"That will do," interrupted Satan, taking the violin from the little man, who bowed low and ceremoniously took his departure. Then the Devil, pointing to the instrument, asked: "Isn't it a beauty?"

The musician, eyeing it keenly, replied: "Yes, it is, but not the kind of violin I play on."

"Oh, I see," carelessly observed the other, "you refer to that extra string."

"Yes," answered the puzzled violinist, examining it closely.

"Allow me to explain the peculiar characteristics of this magnificent instrument," said his Satanic Majesty. "This string," pointing to the G, "is the string of pity; this one," referring to the third, "is the string of hope; this," plunking the A, "is attuned to love, while this one, the E string, gives forth sounds of joy.

"You will observe," went on the visitor, noting the intense interest displayed by the violinist, "that the position of the strings is the same as on any other violin, and therefore will require no additional study on your part."

"But that extra string?" interrupted Diotti, designating the middle one on the violin, a vague foreboding rising within him.

"That," said Mephistopheles solemnly, and with no pretence of sophistry, "is the string of death, and he who plays upon it dies at once."

"The—string—of—death!" repeated the violinist almost inaudibly.

"Yes, the string of death," Satan repeated, "and he who plays upon it dies at once. But," he added cheerfully, "that need not worry you. I noticed a marvellous facility in your arm work. Your staccato and spiccato are wonderful. Every form of bowing appears child's play to you. It will be easy for you to avoid touching the string."

"Why avoid it? Can it not be cut off?"

"Ah! that's the rub. If you examine the violin closely, you will find that the string of death is made up of the extra lengths of the other four strings. To cut it off would destroy the others, and then pity, hope, love, and joy would cease to exist in the soul of the violin."

"How like life itself!" Diotti reflected. "Pity, hope, love, joy end in death, and through death they are born again."

"That's the idea precisely," said Satan, evidently relieved by Diotti's logic and quick perception.

The violinist examined the instrument with the practised eye of an expert, and turning to Satan, said: "The four strings are beautifully white and transparent, but this one is black and odd-looking. What is it wrapped with?"

"The fifth string was added after an unfortunate episode in the Garden of Eden, in which I was somewhat concerned," said Satan soberly. "It is wrapped with strands of hair from the first mother of man." Impressively then he offered the violin to Diotti.

"I dare not take it," said the perplexed musician; "it's from——"

"Yes, it is directly from there; but I brought it from heaven when I—I left," said the fallen angel, with remorse in his voice. "It was my constant companion there. But no one in my domain—not I myself—can play upon it now, for it will respond neither to our longing for pity, hope, love, joy, nor even death," and sadly and retrospectively Satan gazed into vacancy; then, after a long pause: "Try the instrument!"

Diotti placed the violin in position and drew the bow across the string of joy, improvising on it. Almost instantly the birds of the forest darted hither and thither, carolling forth in gladsome strains. The Devil alone was sad, and with emotion said—

"It is many, many years since I have heard that string."

Next the artist changed to the string of pity, and thoughts of the world's sorrows came over him like a pall.

"Wonderful, most wonderful!" said the mystified violinist. "With this instrument I can conquer the world!"

"Aye, more to you than the world," said the tempter, "a woman's love."

A woman's love—to the despairing suitor there was one and only one in this wide, wide world, and her words, burning their way into his heart, had made this temptation possible: "No drooping Clytie could be more constant than I to him who strikes the chord that is responsive in my soul."

Holding the violin aloft, he cried exultingly: "Henceforth thou art mine, though death and oblivion lurk ever near thee!"

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VII.

PERKINS, seated in his office, threw the morning paper aside. "It's no use," he said, turning to the office boy; "I don't believe they ever will find him, dead or alive. Whoever put up the job on Diotti was a past grand master at that sort of thing. The silent assassin that lurks in the shadow of the midnight moon is an explosion of dynamite compared to the party that made away with Diotti. You ask, why should they kill him? My boy, you don't know the world. They were jealous of his enormous hit, of our dazzling success. Jealousy did it."

"The old man fondled it with loving and tender solicitude."

The "they" of Perkins comprised rival managers, rival artists, newspaper critics, and everybody at large who would not concede that the attractions managed by Perkins were the "greatest on earth."

"We'll never see his like again — come in!" this last in answer to a knock.

Diotti appeared at the open door. Perkins jumped like one shot from a catapult, and rushing towards the silent figure in the doorway, exclaimed: "Bless my soul! are you a ghost?"

"A substantial one," said Diotti, with a smile.

"Are you really here?" continued the astonished *impresario*, using Diotti's arm as a pump-handle and pinching him at the same time.

When they were seated, Perkins plied Diotti with all manner of questions: "How did it happen? How did you escape?" and the like, all of which Diotti parried with monosyllabic replies, finally saying: "I was dissatisfied with my playing and went away to study."

"Do you know that the failure to fulfil your contract has cost me at least ten thousand dollars?" said the shrewd manager, the commercial side of his nature asserting itself.

"All of which I will pay," quietly replied the artist. "Besides, I am ready to play now, and you can announce a concert within a week, if you like."

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"If I like?" cried the hustling Perkins. "Here, James," calling his office boy, "run down to the printer's and give him this," making a note of the various sizes of "paper" he desired; "and tell Mr. Tompkins that Diotti is back and will give a concert next Tuesday. Tell Smith to prepare the newspaper 'ads' and notices immediately."

In an hour Perkins had the entire machinery of his office in motion. Within twenty-four hours New York had several versions of the disappearance and return, all leading to one common point—that Diotti would give a concert the coming Tuesday evening.

The announcement of the reappearance of the Tuscan contained a line to the effect that the violinist would play for the first time his new suite—a meditation on the emotions.

He had not seen Mildred.

As he came upon the stage that night, the lights were turned low, and naught but the shadowy outlines of player and violin were seen. His reception by the audience was not enthusiastic. They evidently remembered the disappointment caused by his unexpected disappearance, but this unfriendly attitude soon gave way to evidences of kindlier feelings.

Mildred was there, more beautiful than ever, and to gain her love Diotti would have bartered his soul that moment.

The first movement of the suite was entitled "Pity," and the music flowed like melodious tears. A subdued sob rose and fell with the sadness of the theme.

Mildred's eyes were moistened as she fixed them on the lone figure of the player.

Now the theme of "Pity" changed to "Hope," and hearts grew brighter under the spell. The next movement depicted "Joy." As the *virtuoso's* fingers darted here and there, his music seemed the very laughter of fairy voices, the earth looked roses and sunshine, and Mildred, relaxing her position and leaning forward in the box, with lips slightly parted, was the picture of eager happiness.

The final movement came. Its subject was "Love." The introduction depicted the Arcadian beauty of the trysting-place; love-lit eyes sought each other intuitively, and a great peace brooded over the hearts of all. Then followed the song of the "Passionate Pilgrim."

Grander and grander the melody rose, voicing love's triumph with wondrous sweetness and palpitating rhythm. Mildred, her face flushed with excitement, a heavenly fire in her eyes, and in an attitude of supplication, revelled in the glory of a new-found emotion.

As the violinist concluded his performance, an oppressive silence pervaded the house; then the audience, wild with excitement, burst into thunders of applause. In his dressing-room Diotti was besieged by hosts of people, congratulating him in extravagant terms.

Mildred Wallace came, extending her hands. He took them almost reverently. She looked into his eyes, and he knew he had struck the chord responsive in her soul.

VIII.

THE sun was high in the heavens when the violinist awoke. A great weight had been lifted from his heart; he had passed from darkness into dawn.

A messenger brought him this note:—

"MY DEAR SIGNOR DIOTTI,—I am at home this afternoon, and shall be delighted to see you and return my thanks for the exquisite pleasure you gave me last evening. Music such as yours is indeed the voice of heaven.

"Sincerely,

"MILDRED WALLACE."

He watched the hour drag from eleven to twelve, then counted the minutes to one, and from that time until he left the hotel each second was tabulated in his mind. Arriving at her residence, he was ushered into the drawing-room.

Dressed in simple white, entrancing in her youthful freshness, she entered, her face glowing with happiness. She hastened to him, offering both hands. He held them in a loving, tender grasp, and for a moment neither spoke. Then she, gazing clearly and fearlessly into his eyes, said: "My heart has found its melody!"

He, kneeling like Sir Gareth of old: "The song and the singer are yours for ever."

She, bidding him arise: "And I for ever yours." And wondering at her boldness, she added: "I know and feel that you love me—your eyes confirmed your love before you spoke." Then, convincingly and ingenuously: "I knew you loved me the moment we first met. Then I did not understand what that meant to you; now I do."

He drew her gently to him, and the motive of their happiness was defined in sweet confessions: "My love, my life! My life, my love!"

The magic of his music had changed her

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very being, the breath of love was in her soul, the vision of love was dancing in her eyes. The child of marble, like the statue of old, had come to life.

Day after day he came; they told their love, their hopes, their ambitions. She assumed absolute proprietorship in him. She gloried in her possession.

One day she said: "Angelo, is it your purpose to follow your profession always?"

"Necessarily; it is my livelihood," he replied.

"But do you not think that after we stand at the altar we never should be separated?"

"We will be together always," said he, holding her face between his palms.

"But I notice that women cluster around you after your concerts—and shake your hand longer than they should—and talk to you longer than they should—and go away looking self-satisfied?" she replied brokenly, much as a little girl tells of the theft of her doll.

"Nonsense!" he said, smiling; "that is all part of my profession. It is not me they care for, it is the music I give that makes them happy. If, in my playing, I achieve results out of the common, they admire me!" and he kissed away the unwelcome tears.

"I know," she continued; "but lately, since we have loved each other, I cannot bear to see a woman near you. In my dreams, again and again an indefinable shadow mockingly comes and cries to me: 'He is not to be yours; he is to be mine.'"

Diotti flushed and drew her to him. "Darling," his voice carrying conviction, "I am yours, you are mine, all in all, in life here and beyond!"

Her father was expected from Europe on the succeeding day's steamer. Mr. Wallace was a busy man. The various gigantic enterprises he served as president or director occupied most of his time. He had been absent in Europe for several months, and Mildred was anxiously awaiting his return to tell him of her love.

When Mr. Wallace came to his residence the next morning, his daughter met him with a fond display of filial affection; they walked into the drawing-room, hand in hand; he saw a picture of the violinist on the piano. "Who's the handsome young fellow?" he asked.

"That is Angelo Diotti, the famous violinist," she said, but she could not add another word.

As they strolled through the rooms, he noticed no less than three likenesses of the Tuscan. And as they passed her room, he saw still another on the chiffonier.

"Seems to me the house is running wild with photographs of that fiddler," he said.

For the first time in her life she was self-conscious. "I will wait for a more opportune time to tell him," she thought.

In the scheme of Diotti's appearance in New York there were to be two more concerts. One was to be given that evening. Mildred coaxed her father to accompany her to hear the violinist. Mr. Wallace was not fond of music. "It had been knocked out of him on the farm up in Vermont, when he was a boy," he would apologetically explain; and besides, he had the old puritanical abhorrence of stage people—putting them all in one class—as puppets who danced or played or talked for an idle and unthinking public.

So it was with the thought of a wasted evening that he accompanied Mildred to the concert.

The entertainment was a repetition of the others Diotti had given, and at its end Mildred said to her father: "Come, I want to congratulate Signor Diotti in person."

"That is entirely unnecessary," he replied.

"It is my desire," and the girl led the unwilling parent back of the scenes and into Diotti's dressing-room.

Mildred introduced Diotti to her father, who after a few commonplaces lapsed into silence. The daughter's enthusiastic interest in Diotti's performance, and her tender solicitude for his weariness after the efforts of the evening, quickly attracted the attention of Mr. Wallace and irritated him exceedingly.

When father and daughter were seated in their carriage and were hurriedly driving home, he said: "Mildred, I prefer that you have as little to say to that man as possible."

"What do you object to in him?" she asked.

"Everything. Of what use is a man who dawdles away his time on a fiddle? Of what benefit is he to mankind? Do fiddlers build cities? Do they delve into the earth for precious metals? Do they sow the seed and harvest the grain! No, no; they are drones—the barnacles of society."

"Father, how can you advance such an argument? Music's votaries offer no apologies for their art. The husbandman places the grain within the breast of Mother Earth for man's material welfare; God places music in

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the heart of man for his spiritual development. In man's spring-time, his bridal day, music means joy. In man's winter-time, his burial day, music means comfort. The heaven-born muse has added to the happiness of the world. Diotti is a great genius. His art brings rest and tranquillity to the wearied and despairing," and she did not speak again until they had reached the house.

The lights were turned low when father and daughter went into the drawing-room. Mr. Wallace felt that he had failed to convince Mildred of the utter worthlessness of fiddlers, big or little, and as one dissatisfied with the outcome of a contest, re-entered the lists.

"He has visited you?"

"Yes, father."

"Often?"

"Yes, father," spoken calmly.

Her father came over to her, half coaxingly, half seriously. "Mildred, I wish his visits to cease. People will imagine there is a romantic attachment between you."

"There is, father," out it came. "He loves me, and I love him."

"What?" shouted Mr. Wallace, and then severely: "This must cease immediately."

She rose quietly and led her father over to the mantel. Placing a hand on each of his shoulders, she said—

"Father, I will obey you implicitly if you can name a reasonable objection to the man I love. But you cannot. I love him with my whole soul. I love him for the nobility of his character, and because there is none other in the world for him, nor for me."

IX.

OLD SANDERS as boy and man had been in the employ of the banking and brokerage firm of Wallace Brothers for two generations. The firm gradually had advanced his position until now he was confidential adviser and general manager, besides having an interest in the profits of the business.

He enjoyed the friendship of Mr. Wallace, and had been a constant visitor at his house from the first days of that gentleman's married life. He himself was alone in the world, a confirmed bachelor. He had seen Mildred creep from babyhood into childhood, and bud from girlhood to womanhood. To Mildred he was one of that numerous army of brevet relations known as "Granpop," "Pop," or "Uncle." To her he was Uncle Sanders.

If the old man had one touch of human nature in him, it was a solicitude for Mildred's future—an authority arrogated to himself—to see that she married the right man; but even that was directed to her material gain in this world's goods, and not to any sentimental consideration for her happiness. He flattered himself that by timely suggestion he had "stumped" at least half-a-dozen would-be candidates for Mildred's hand. He pooh-poohed love as a necessity for marital felicity.

"You can get at a man's income," he would say, "but not at his heart. Love without money won't travel as far as money without love."

He was cold-blooded and generally disliked by the men under him. The more evil-minded gossips in the bank said he was in league with "Old Nick." That, of course, was absurd, for it does not necessarily follow, because a man suggests a means looking to an end, disreputable though it be, that he has Mephistopheles for a silent partner. The conservative element among the *employés* would not openly venture so far, but rather thought if his Satanic Majesty and old Sanders ran a race, the former would come in a bad second, if he were not distanced altogether.

The old man always reached the office at nine. Mr. Wallace usually arrived a half-hour later, seldom later, which was so well understood by Sanders that he was greatly surprised when he walked into the president's office, the morning after that gentleman had attended Diotti's concert, to find the head of the firm already there and apparently waiting for him.

"Sanders," said the banker, "I want your advice on a matter of great importance and concern to me."

Sanders came across the room and stood beside the desk.

"Briefly as possible, I am much exercised about my daughter."

The old man simply asked: "Who is the man?"

"He is the violinist who has created such a sensation here—Angelo Diotti."

"Yes, I've seen the name in print," returned the old man.

"He has bewitched Mildred. I never have seen her show the least interest in a man before. She never has appeared to me as an impressionable girl or one that could easily be won."

"That is very true," ejaculated Sanders. "She always seemed tractable and open to reason in all questions of love and courting. I can recall several instances where I have

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"He knew he had struck the chord responsive."

set her right by my estimation of men, and invariably she has accepted my views."

"And mine until now," said the father, and then he recounted his experience of the night before. "I had hoped she would not fall in love, but be a prop and comfort to me now that I am alone. I am dismayed at the prospect before me. We must find some

means to end this attachment. A union between a musician and my daughter would be most mortifying to me. Some plan must be devised to separate them, but she must not know of it, for she is impatient of restraint and will not brook opposition."

"Are you confident she really loves this violinist?"

"She confessed as much to me," said the perturbed banker.

"Are you confident he loves her?"

"No. Even if he does not, he no doubt makes the pretence, and she believes him. A man who fiddles for money is not likely to ignore an opportunity to angle for the same commodity," and the banker, with a look of scorn on his face, threw himself back into the chair.

"Does she know that you do not approve of this man?"

"I told her that I desired the musician's visits to cease."

"And her answer?"

"She said she would obey me if I could name one reasonable objection to the man, and then, with an air of absolute confidence in the impossibility of such a contingency, added: 'But you cannot.'"

"Yes, but you must," said Sanders. "Mildred is strangely constituted. If she loves this man, her love can be more deadly to the choice of her heart than her hate to one she abhors. The impatience of restraint you speak of, and her very inability to brook opposition, can be turned to good account now."

"Your plan?" eagerly asked the father, whose confidence in his secretary was absolute.

"I would like to study them together. Your position will be stronger with Mildred if you show no open opposition to the man or his aspirations. Bring us together at your house some evening, and if I cannot enter a wedge of discontent, then they are not as others."

* * * * *

Mildred was delighted when her father told her on his return in the evening that he was anxious to meet Signor Diotti, and suggested a dinner-party within a few days. He said he would invite Mr. Sanders, as that gentleman, no doubt, would consider it a great privilege to meet the famous musician. Mildred immediately sent an invitation to Diotti, adding a request that he would bring his violin and play for Uncle Sanders, as the latter had found it impossible to attend his concerts during the season, yet was fond of music, especially violin music.

X.

THE little dinner-party passed off pleasantly, and as old Sanders lighted his cigar he confided to Diotti, with a braggart's assurance, that when he was a youngster he was the best fiddler for twenty miles around. "I tell you there is nothing like a fiddler to catch a petticoat," he said, with a sharp nudge of his elbow into Diotti's ribs. "When I played the 'Devil's Dream,' there wasn't a girl in the country could keep from dancing; and 'Rosalie, the Prairie Flower' brought them on their knees to me every time." Then, after a pause: "I don't believe people fiddle as well nowadays as they did in the good old times," and he actually sighed in remembrance.

Mildred smiled and whispered to Diotti. He took his violin from the case and began playing. It seemed to her as if from above showers of silvery merriment were falling to earth. The old man watched intently, and as the player changed from joy to pity, from love back to happiness, Sanders never withdrew his gaze. His bead-like eyes followed the artist; he saw each individual finger rise and fall, and the bow bound over the finger-board, always avoiding, never coming in contact with the middle string.

As Diotti ceased playing, Sanders applauded vociferously, and moving towards the violinist, said: "Magnificent! I never heard better playing! What is the make of your violin?"

Diotti, startled at this question, hurriedly put the instrument in its case. "Oh, it is a famous make," he drawled.

"Will you let me examine it?" said the elder, placing his hand on the case.

"I never allow anyone to touch my violin," replied Diotti, closing the cover quickly.

"Why, is there a magic charm about it, that you fear other hands may discover?" queried the old man.

"I prefer that no one handle it," said the *virtuoso* commandingly.

"Very well," sighed the old man resignedly; "there are violins and violins, and no doubt yours comes within that category," this half sneeringly.

"Uncle," interposed Mildred tactfully, "you must not be so persistent. Signor Diotti prizes his violin highly and will not allow anyone to play upon it but himself," and the look of relief on Diotti's face amply repaid her.

Mr. Wallace came in at that moment, and with perfunctory interest in his guest, invited

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him to examine the splendid collection of Revolutionary relics in his study.

The father and the violinist went to the study, leaving the daughter and old Sanders in the drawing-room. The old man, seating himself in a large arm-chair, said : "Mildred, my dear, I do not wonder at the enormous success of this Diotti."

"He is a wonderful artist," replied Mildred. "Critics and public alike place him among the greatest of his profession."

"He is a good-looking young fellow, too," said the old man.

"I think he is the handsomest man I ever have seen," replied the girl.

"Where does he come from?" continued Sanders.

"St. Casciano, a small town in Tuscany."

"Has he a family?"

"Only a sister, whom he loves dearly."

"And no one else?"

"None that I have heard him speak of. No, certainly not," rather impetuously replied Mildred.

"How old is he?" continued the old man.

"Twenty-eight next month. Why do you wish to know?" she quizzically asked.

"Simply idle curiosity," old Sanders carelessly replied. "I wonder if he is in love with anyone in Tuscany?"

"Of course not; how could he be?" quickly rejoined the girl.

"And why not?" added old Sanders.

"Why? Because, because—he is in love with someone in America."

"Ah! with you, I see," said the old man, as if it were the greatest discovery of his life. "Are you sure he has not some beautiful sweetheart in Tuscany as well as here?"

"What a foolish question!" she replied. "Men like Angelo Diotti do not fall in love as soldiers fall in line. Love to a man of his nobility is too serious to be treated so lightly."

"Very true, and that's what has excited my curiosity!" whereupon the old man smoked away in silence.

"Excited your curiosity!" said Mildred. "What do you mean?"

"It may be something; it may be nothing; but my speculative instinct has been aroused by a strange peculiarity in his playing."

"His playing is wonderful!" replied Mildred proudly.

"Aye, more than wonderful! I watched him intently," said the old man. "I noted with what marvellous facility he went from one string to the other. But however rapid, however difficult the composition, he steadily avoided one string; in fact, that string remained untouched during the entire hour he played for us."

"Perhaps the composition did not call for its use," suggested Mildred, unconscious of any other meaning in the old man's observation save praise for her lover.

"Perhaps so; but the oddity impressed me; it was a new string to me. I have never seen one like it on a violin before."

"That can scarcely be, for I do not remember of Signor Diotti telling me there was anything unusual about his violin."

"I am sure it has a fifth string."

"And I am equally sure the string can be of no importance, or Angelo would have told me of it," Mildred quickly rejoined.

"I recall a strange story of Paganini," continued the old man, apparently not noticing her interruption. "He became infatuated with a lady of high rank, who was insensible of the admiration he had for her beauty.

"He composed a love scene for two strings, the 'E' and 'G'; the first was to personate the lady, the second himself. It commenced with a species of dialogue, intending to represent her indifference and his passion; now sportive, now sad; laughter on her part, and tears from him, ending in an apotheosis of loving reconciliation. It affected the lady to that degree that ever after she loved the violinist."

"And no doubt they were happy?" Mildred suggested smilingly.

"Yes," said the old man, with assumed sentiment, "even when his profession called him far away; for she had made him promise her he never would play upon the two strings whose music had won her heart, so those strings were mute, except for her."

The old man puffed away in silence for a moment, then with logical directness continued: "Perhaps the string that's mute upon Diotti's violin is mute for some such reason."

"Nonsense!" said the girl half impatiently.

"The string is black and glossy as the tresses that fall in tangled skeins on the shoulders of the dreamy beauties of Tuscany. It may be an idle fancy, but if that string is not a woven strand from some woman's crowning glory, then I have no discernment."

"You are jesting, uncle," she replied, but her heart was heavy already.

"Ask him to play on that string. I'll

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wager he'll refuse," said the old man contemptuously.

"He will not refuse when I ask him; but I will not to-night," answered the unhappy girl, with forced determination. Then taking the old man's hands, she said: "Good-night; I am going to my room. Please make my excuses to Signor Diotti and father," and wearily she ascended the stairs.

Mr. Wallace and the violinist soon after joined old Sanders, fresh cigars were lighted, and regrets most earnestly expressed by the violinist for Mildred's "sick headache."

"No need to worry; she will be all right in the morning," said Sanders, and he and the violinist buttoned their coats tightly about them, for the night was bitter cold, and together they left the house.

In her bedchamber Mildred stood looking at the portrait of her lover. She studied his face long and intently; then crossing the room, she mechanically took a volume from the shelf; and as she opened it, her eyes fell on these lines: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!"

* * * * *

Old Sanders builded better than he knew.

XI.

When Diotti and old Sanders left the house, they walked rapidly down Fifth Avenue. It was after eleven, and the streets were bare of pedestrians, but blinking-eyed cabs came up the Avenue, looking at a distance like a trail of megatheriums gliding through the darkness.

When they reached Fourteenth Street, the elder said: "I live but a block from here," pointing eastward. "What do you say to a hot toddy? It will warm the cockles of your heart. Come over to my house, and I'll mix you the best drink in New York."

The younger thought the suggestion a good one, and they turned towards the house of old Sanders.

It was a neat, red brick, two-storey house, well in from the street, off the line of the more pretentious buildings on either side. As the old man opened the iron gate, the police officer on the beat passed; he peered into the faces of the men, and recognising Sanders, said: "Tough night, sir."

"Very," replied the addressed.

"All good old gentlemen should be in bed at this hour," said the officer, lifting one foot after the other in an effort to keep warm, and in so doing showing little terpsichorean grace.

"It's only the shank of the evening, officer," rejoined the old man, as he fumbled with the latch-key and finally opened the door. The two men entered and the officer passed on.

Every man has a fad. Old Sanders's fad was mixing toddies and punches.

"The nectar of the gods pales into nothingness when compared with a toddy such as I make," said he. "Ambrosia may have been all right for the degenerates of the old Grecian and Roman days, but an American gentleman demands a toddy—a hot toddy." And then he proceeded with circumspection and dignity to demonstrate the process of decocting that mysterious beverage.

The two men took off their overcoats and went into the sitting-room. A pile of logs burned brightly in the fireplace. The old man threw another on the burning heap, filled the kettle with water and hung it over the fire. Next he went to the sideboard and brought forth the various ingredients for the toddy.

"How do you like America?" said the elder, with commonplace indifference, as he crunched a lump of sugar in the bottom of the glass, dissolving the particles with a few drops of water.

"Very much indeed!" said the Tuscan, with the air of a man who had answered the question before.

"Great country for girls!" said Sanders, pouring a liberal quantity of Old Tom gin in the glass and placing it where it gradually would get warm.

"And for men!" responded Diotti enthusiastically.

"Men don't amount to much here; women run everything," retorted the elder, while he repeated the process of preparing the sugar and gin in the second glass. The kettle began to sing.

"That's music for you!" chuckled the old man, raising the lid to see if the water had boiled sufficiently. "Do you know, I think a dinner horn and a singing kettle beat a symphony all hollow for real downright melody," and he lifted the kettle from the fireplace.

Diotti smiled.

With mathematical accuracy the old man filled the two tumblers with boiling water.

"Try that," handing a glass of the toddy to Diotti; "you will find it all right," and the old man drew an arm-chair towards the fireplace, smacking his lips in anticipation.

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"'Father, I will obey you implicitly.'"

The violinist placed his chair closer to the fire and sipped the drink.

"Your country is noted for its beautiful women?"

"We have exquisite types of femininity in Tuscany," said the young man, with patriotic ardour.

"Any as fine looking as—as—as, well, say the young lady we dined with to-night?"

"Miss Wallace?" queried the Tuscan,

"Yes, Miss Wallace," this rather impatiently.

"She is very beautiful," said Diotti, with solemn admiration.

"Have you ever seen anyone prettier?" questioned the old man, after a second prolonged sip.

"I have no desire to see anyone more beautiful," said the violinist, feeling that the other was trying to draw him out, and determined not to yield.

"You will pardon the inquisitiveness of an old man, but are not you musicians a most impressionable lot?"

"We are human," answered the violinist.

"I imagined you were like sailors, and had a sweetheart in every port."

"That would be a delightful prospect to one having polygamous aspirations; but for myself, one sweetheart is enough," laughingly said the musician.

"Only one! Well, here's to her! With this nectar fit for the gods and goddesses of Olympus, let us drink to her," said old Sanders, with convivial dignity, his glass raised on high. "Here's wishing health and happiness to the dreamy-eyed Tuscan beauty whom you love and who loves you."

"Stop!" said Diotti; "we will drink to the first part of that toast," and holding his glass against that of his bibulous host, continued: "To the dreamy-eyed women of my country, exacting of their lovers, obedient to their parents, and loyal to their husbands!" and his voice rose in sonorous rhythm with the words.

"Now for the rest of the toast. To the one you love and who loves you!" came from Sanders.

"To the one I love and who loves me! God bless her!" fervently cried the guest.

"Is she a Tuscan?" asked old Sanders slyly.

"She is an angel!" impetuously answered the violinist.

"Then she is an American!" said the old man gallantly.

"She is an American," repeated Diotti, forgetting himself for the instant.

"Let me see if I can guess her name," said old Sanders. "It's — it's Mildred Wallace!" and his manner suggested a child solving a riddle.

The violinist, about to speak, checked himself and remained silent.

"I sincerely pity Mildred if ever she falls in love," abstractedly continued the host while filling another glass.

"Pray why?" was anxiously asked.

The old man shifted his position and assumed a confidential tone and attitude. "Signor Diotti, jealousy is a more universal passion than love itself. Environment may develop our character, influence our tastes, and even soften our features, but heredity determines the intensity of the two leading passions, love and jealousy. Mildred's mother was a beautiful woman, but consumed with an overpowering jealousy of her husband. It was because she loved him. The bodyguard of jealousy—envy, malice, and hatred—were not in her composition. When Mildred was a child of twelve, I have seen her mother suffer the keenest anguish because Mr. Wallace fondled the child. She thought the child had robbed her of her husband's love."

"Such a woman as Miss Wallace would command the entire love and admiration of her husband at all times," said the artist.

"If she should marry a man she simply likes, her chances for happiness would be normal."

"In what manner?" asked the lover.

"Because she would be little concerned about him or his actions."

"Then you believe," said the musician, "that the man who loves her and whom she loves should give her up because her chances of happiness would be greater away from him than with him?"

"That would be an unselfish love," said the elder.

"Suppose they have declared their passion?" asked Diotti.

"A parting before doubt and jealousy had entered her mind would let the image of her sacrificing lover live within her soul as a tender and lasting memory; he always would be her ideal," and the accent old Sanders placed on "*always*" left no doubt of his belief.

"Why should doubt and jealousy enter her life?" said the violinist, falling into the personal character of the discussion despite himself.

"My dear sir, from what I observed to-night, she loves you. You are a dangerous man for a jealous woman to love. You are not a cloistered monk, you are a man before the public; you win the admiration of many; some women do not hesitate to show you their preference. To a woman like Mildred that would be torture; she could not and would not separate the professional artist from the lover or husband."

And Diotti, remembering Mildred's words, could not refute the old man's statements.

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XII.

A TIPSY man is never interesting, and Sanders in that condition was no exception. The old man arose with some effort, walked towards the window, and, shading his eyes, looked out. The snow was drifting, swept hither and thither by the cutting wind that came through the streets in great gusts. Turning to the violinist, he said: "It's an awful night; better remain here until morning. You'll not find a cab; in fact, I will not let you go while this storm continues," and the old man raised the window, thrusting his head out for an instant. As he did so, the icy blast that came in settled any doubt in the young man's mind, and he concluded to stop over night.

It was nearly two o'clock; Sanders showed him to his room and then returned downstairs to see that everything was snug and secure. After changing his heavy shoes for a pair of old slippers and wrapping a dressing-gown around him, the old man stretched his legs towards the fire and sipped his toddy.

"He isn't a bad sort for a violinist," mused the old man. "If he were worth a million, I believe I'd advise Wallace to let him marry her. A fiddler! A million! Sounds funny," and he laughed shrilly.

He turned his head, and his eyes caught sight of Diotti's violin case resting on the centre table. He staggered from the chair and went towards it; opening the lid softly, he lifted the silken coverlet placed over the instrument and examined the strings intently. "I am right," he said; "it is wrapped with hair, and no doubt from a woman's head. Eureka!" and the old man, happy in the discovery that his surmises were correct, returned to his chair and his toddy.

He sat looking into the fire. The violin had brought back memories of the past and its dead. He mumbled, as if to the fire: "She loved me; she loved my violin. I was a devil; my violin was a devil," and the shadows on the wall swayed like accusing spirits. He buried his face in his hands and cried piteously: "I was so young; too young to know." He spoke as if he would conciliate the ghastly shades that moved restlessly up and down, when suddenly: "Sanders, don't be a fool!"

He ambled towards the table again. "I wonder who made the violin? He would not tell me when I asked him to-night. Thank you for your pains, but I will find out myself," and he took the violin from the case. Holding it with the light slanting over it, he peered inside, but found no inscription. "No maker's name—strange," he said. He tiptoed to the foot of the stairs and listened intently. "He must be asleep; he won't hear me," and noiselessly he closed the door. "I guess if I play a tune on it, he won't know."

He took the bow from its place in the case and tightened it. He listened again. "He is fast asleep," he whispered. "I'll play the song I always played for her—until——" and the old man repeated the words of the refrain:—

"Fair as a lily, joyous and free,
Light of the prairie home was she;
Everyone who knew her felt the gentle power
Of Rosalie, the Prairie Flower."

He sat again in the arm-chair and placed the violin under his chin. Tremulously he drew the bow across the middle string, his bloodless fingers moving slowly up and down.

The theme he played was the melody to the verse he had just repeated, but the expression was remorse.

* * * * *

Diotti sat upright in bed. "I am positive I heard a violin!" he said, holding one hand towards his head in an attitude of listening. He was wide awake. The drifting snow beat against the window-panes, and the wind without shrieked like a thousand demons of the night. He could sleep no more. He arose and hastily dressed. The room was bitterly cold; he was shivering. He thought of the crackling logs in the fireplace below. He groped his way along the darkened staircase. As he opened the door leading into the sitting-room, the fitful gleam of the dying embers cast a ghastly light over the face of a corpse.

Diotti stood a moment, his eyes transfixed with horror. The violin and bow still in the hands of the dead man told him plainer than words what had happened. He went towards the chair, took the instrument from old Sanders's hands, and laid it on the table. Then he knelt beside the body, and placing his ear close over the heart, listened for some sign of life; but the old man was beyond human aid.

He wheeled the chair to the side of the room and moved the body to the sofa. Gently he covered it with a robe. The awfulness of the situation forced itself upon him, and bitterly he blamed himself. The terrible power of the instrument dawned upon him in all its force. Often he had played on the strings telling of pity, hope,

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love, and joy; but now, for the first time, he realised what the fifth string meant.

"I must give it back to its owner."

"If you do, you can never regain it," whispered a voice within.

"I do not need it," said the violinist almost audibly.

"Perhaps not," said the voice; "but if her love should wane, how would you rekindle it? Without the violin you would be helpless."

"Is it not possible that, in this old man's death, all its fatal power has been expended?"

He went to the table and took the instrument from its place. "You won her for me; you have brought happiness and sunshine into my life. No! No! I cannot, will not give you up." Then placing the violin and bow in its case, he locked it.

The day was breaking. In an hour the baker's boy came. Diotti went to the door, gave him a note addressed to Mr. Wallace, and asked him to deliver it at once. The boy consented and drove rapidly away.

Within an hour Mr. Wallace arrived. Diotti told the story of the night. After the undertaker had taken charge of the body, he found on the dead man's neck, just to the left of the chin, a dullish, black bruise which might have been caused by the pressing of some blunt instrument, or by a man's thumb.

"'If you do not use that string, we part for ever!'"

XIII.

On leaving the house of the dead man, Diotti walked wearily to his hotel. In flaring type at every street corner he saw the announcement for Thursday evening, March 31st, of Angelo Diotti's last appearance. "To-night I play for the last time," he murmured in a voice filled with deepest regret.

The feeling of exultation so common to artists who finally reach the goal of their ambition was wanting in Diotti this morning. He could not rid himself of the memory of Sanders's tragic death. The figure of the old man clutching the violin and staring with glassy eyes into the dying fire would not away.

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When he reached the hotel, he tried to rest, but his excited brain banished every thought of slumber. Restlessly he moved about the room, and finally dressing, he left the hotel for his daily call on Mildred. It was after five o'clock when he arrived. She received him coldly and without any mark of affection.

She had heard of Mr. Sanders's death; her father had sent word. "It shocked me greatly," she said; "but perhaps the old man is happier in a world far from strife and care. When we realise all the misery there is in this world, we often wonder why we should care to live." Her tone was despondent, her face was drawn and blanched, and her eyes gave evidence of weeping.

Diotti divined that something beyond sympathy for old Sanders's sudden death racked her soul. He went towards her, and lovingly taking her hands, bent low and pressed his lips to them; they were cold as marble.

"Darling," he said, "something has made you unhappy. What is it?"

"Tell me, Angelo, and truly; is your violin like other violins?"

This unexpected question came so suddenly he could not control his agitation.

"Why do you ask?" he said.

"You must answer me directly!"

"No, Mildred; my violin is different from any other I have ever seen," this hesitatingly and with great effort at composure.

"In what way is it different?" she almost demanded.

"It is peculiarly constructed; it has an extra string. But why this sudden interest in the violin? Let us talk of you, of me, of both, of our future," said he, with enforced cheerfulness.

"No, we will talk of the violin. Of what use is the extra string?"

"None whatever," was the quick reply.

"Then why not cut it off?"

"No, no, Mildred; you do not understand!" he cried. "I cannot do that."

"You cannot do it when I ask it?" she exclaimed.

"Oh, Mildred! do not ask me. I cannot, cannot do it!" and the face of the affrighted musician told plainer than words of the turmoil raging in his soul.

"You made me believe that I was the only one you loved," passionately she cried; "the only one; that your happiness was incomplete without me. You led me into the region of light only to make the darkness greater when I descended to earth again. I ask you to do a simple thing, and you refuse, because another has commanded you."

"Mildred, Mildred! if you love me, do not speak thus!"

And she, with imagination greater than reasoning power, at once saw a Tuscan beauty and Diotti mutually pledging their love with their lives.

"Go!" she said, pointing to the door, "go to the one who owns you body and soul! Then say that a foolish woman threw her heart at your feet and that you scorned it!" She sank to the sofa.

He went towards the door and in a voice that sounded like the echo of despair, protested: "Mildred, I love you, love you a thousand times more than I do my life. If I should destroy the string, as you ask, love and hope would leave me for evermore. Death would not be robbed of its terror!" and with bowed head he went forth into the twilight.

She ran to the window and watched his retreating figure as he vanished. "Uncle Sanders was right; he loves another woman, and that string binds them together. He belongs to her!" Long and silently she stood by the window, gazing at the shadowy curtain of the coming night. At last her face softened. "Perhaps he does not love her now, but fears her vengeance. No, no, he is not a coward! I should have approached him differently. He is proud, and maybe he resented my imperative manner," and a thousand reasons why he should or should not have removed that string flashed through her mind.

"I will go early to the concert to-night and see him before he plays. Uncle Sanders said he did not touch that string when he played. Of course he will play on it for me, even if he will not cut it off; and then if he says he loves me, and only me, I will believe him. I want to believe him! I want to believe him!" all this in a semi-hysterical way addressed to the violinist's portrait on the piano.

When she entered her carriage an hour later, telling the coachman to drive direct to the stage-door of the Academy, she appeared more fascinating than ever before.

She was sitting in his dressing-room waiting for him when he arrived. He had aged years in a day. His step was uncertain, his eyes were sunken, and his hand trembled. His face brightened as she arose, and Mildred met him in the centre of the room. He lifted her hand and pressed a kiss upon it.

"Angelo, dear," she said in repentant

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tone, "I am sorry I pained you this afternoon; but I am jealous, so jealous of you."

"Jealous?" he said smilingly. "There is no need of jealousy in our lives; we love each other truly and only."

"That is just what I think. We will never doubt each other again, will we?"

"Never!" he said solemnly.

He had placed his violin case on the table in the room. She went to it and tapped the top playfully; then suddenly said: "I am going to look at your violin, Angelo," and before he could interfere, she had taken the silken coverlet off and was examining the instrument closely. "Sure enough, it has five strings; the middle one stands higher than the rest and is of glossy blackness. Uncle Sanders was right; it is a woman's hair!

"Why is that string made of hair?" she asked, controlling her emotion.

"Only a fancy," he said, feigning indifference.

"Though you would not remove it at my wish this afternoon, Angelo, I know you will not refuse to play on it for me now?"

He raised his hands in supplication. "Mildred! Mildred! Stop! do not ask it!"

"You refuse after I have come repentant and confessing my doubts and fears? Uncle Sanders said you would not play upon it for me; he told me it was wrapped with a woman's hair, the hair of the woman you love."

"I swear to you, Mildred, that I love but you!"

"Love me? Bah! And another woman's tresses sacred to you? Another woman's pledge sacred to you? I asked you to remove the string; you refused. I ask you now to play upon it; you refuse," and she paced the room like a caged tigress.

"I will watch to-night when you play," she flashed. "If you do not use that string, we part for ever!"

He stood before her and attempted to take her hand; she repulsed him savagely.

Sadly then he asked: "And if I do play upon it?"

"I am yours for ever—yours through life—through eternity!" she cried passionately.

The call-boy announced Diotti's turn; the violinist led Mildred to a seat at the entrance of the stage. His appearance was the signal for prolonged and enthusiastic greeting from the enormous audience present. He clearly was the idol of the metropolis.

The lights were lowered, a single calcium playing with its soft and silvery rays upon his face and shoulders. The expectant audience scarcely breathed as he began his theme. It was pity—pity moulded into a concord of beautiful sounds; and when he began the second movement, it was but a continuation of the first; his fingers sought but one string, that of pity. Again he played, and once more pity stole from the violin.

When he left the stage, Mildred rushed to him. "You did not touch that string; you refuse my wish?" and the sounds of mighty applause without drowned his pleading voice.

"I told you if you refused me, I was lost to you for ever! Do you understand?"

Diotti returned slowly to the centre of the stage and remained motionless until the audience subsided. Facing Mildred, whose colour was heightened by the intensity of her emotion, he began softly to play. His fingers sought the string of Death. The audience listened with breathless interest. The composition was weirdly and strangely fascinating.

The player told with wondrous power of despair—of hope, of faith: sunshine crept into the hearts of all as he pictured the promise of an eternal day; higher and higher, softer and softer grew the theme until it echoed as if it were afar in the realms of light and floating o'er the waves of a golden sea.

Suddenly the audience was startled by the snapping of a string; the violin and bow dropped from the nerveless hands of the player. He fell helpless to the stage.

Mildred rushed to him, crying: "Angelo, Angelo, what is it? What has happened?" Bending over him, she gently raised his head and showered unrestrained kisses upon his lips, oblivious of all save her lover.

"Speak! Speak!" she implored.

A faint smile illumined his face; he gazed with ineffable tenderness into her weeping eyes, then slowly closed his own as if in slumber.

THE END.

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MANGEL ROOTS LAID OUT FOR SELECTING STOCK SEED: "SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST."

THE TESTING OF FARM AND FLOWER SEEDS.

By William G. FitzGerald.

Illustrated from Copyright Photographs specially prepared for this article at Messrs. Sutton and Sons', at their famous Seed Establishment, Reading.

IT is one thing to procure flower, vegetable, and other seeds from growing stock, and quite another to be sure that those seeds have any life in them. You or I probably have never thought of this before, but a moment's reflection will show how important a thing it is to the entire nation. Take a sackful of seed. It may be expensive stuff—probably worth ten times its weight in gold, as we shall presently see; but that is only on the supposition that the seed is alive. How is this difficulty to be got over without planting, and therefore sacrificing the whole of this valuable property? The thing is really simple enough: a pinch or a handful of that seed is taken out of the sack and tested. As there are legions of different kinds of seed, however, and they have to go out to farmers, flower-growers, and many other people throughout the country, in tons, the testing of seeds is a most important and peculiar industry, and one which, notwithstanding its extraordinary interest, has never before been dealt with in a popular magazine.

Fifty or sixty years ago "live" seeds were rare, and adulteration was the rule. In fact, there was a big trade in dead seeds, which were no more use than dust and sand, and, though you may hardly believe it, such seeds as *might* have had any life in them were actually killed by specially made machinery for fear they should give the game away! The machine-makers actually guaranteed that not a single seed would remain whose vitality would testify to the swindle. It was a great business. Cabbage, broccoli, and other round seeds are worth several shillings a pound. Well, what was easier than to get another seed like this in form and colour and mix it up in large quantities with the costly stuff—"killed rape," for example, at 2*d*. or 3*d*. a pound? For years this kind of thing went on, but at last a Government inquiry was instituted, and the Seeds Adulteration Act was the result. Nowadays the great seed merchants of this country test their seeds before they are sent out, no matter whether the order consists of a thousand bushels of turnips or a little bag of some costly flower seed.

In one of the greatest establishments in

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the world of this kind you will see, under unnumbered acres of glass, nearly every rare flower in the world in gorgeous profusion, the whole force and energy of each plant being concentrated into one solitary bloom or bunch of bloom, from which the seed is raised. Remember, the idea always is to get the finest possible quality and species in the seed, and to keep up the strain at all costs.

HAND-PICKING POTATOES FOR SEED.

It is a big step from primulas to mangel-wurzels; but here, again, the procuring of the ideal seed of high germinating power is an extraordinarily intricate business, calling for the experience of a lifetime. Take a handful of mangel-wurzel seed. How are you to know that that seed will produce the ideal mangel—not a lofty, but a useful ideal? Will the resulting mangel be of noble proportions and the right consistency? Will he be among mangels what the Venus of Milo is to artists considering the female form? It is impossible to say, unless the pedigree of that seed is well known. The matter is finally set at rest by the system of procuring the mangels which produced that seed. Often you will see an enormous field laid out with serried rows of mangels, and a keen-eyed expert, of perhaps half a century's experience, going down the rows singling out ideal roots. What could be more simple? These are planted, and seed obtained from them, with the certainty that the parent stock was the finest that could be grown. The same routine is gone through with swedes, of which a fine pedigree crop will be laid out, and several tons of typical specimen roots chosen for the raising of seed. Said the expert inspector himself to the writer: "There must be the characteristic small neck, freedom from side roots, the true colour, hardness, and, above all, density, which means high 'feeding' quality." It is an extraordinary fact in connection with these "ideal swedes" that they have to be planted in a secure spot, as they are liable to be ruined by pollen borne on the wind from a kindred variety. Between the choosing of the roots and the sale of seed from the selected stock a period of six years will elapse.

It is pretended that we are not an agricultural country, and yet in the height of the seed season 15,000 letters and post-cards

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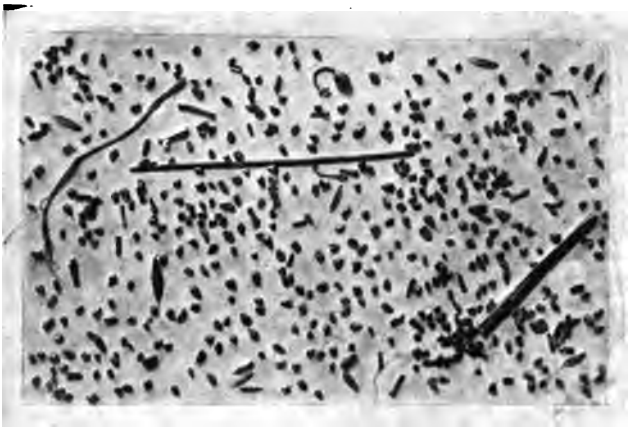
have passed through the private post-office of one of our great seed merchants.

As in the case of the mangels, so you will see great rows of experts picking over seed potatoes, with eyes and judgment trained by years of experience in the matter of the "survival of the fittest." Here, again, the "table qualities," and a constitution capable of resisting blight, must be considered.



CLOVER SEED AS FIRST FROM THRESHING-MACHINE.

The seed of its weed parasite is exactly like it, rendering a test absolutely necessary.

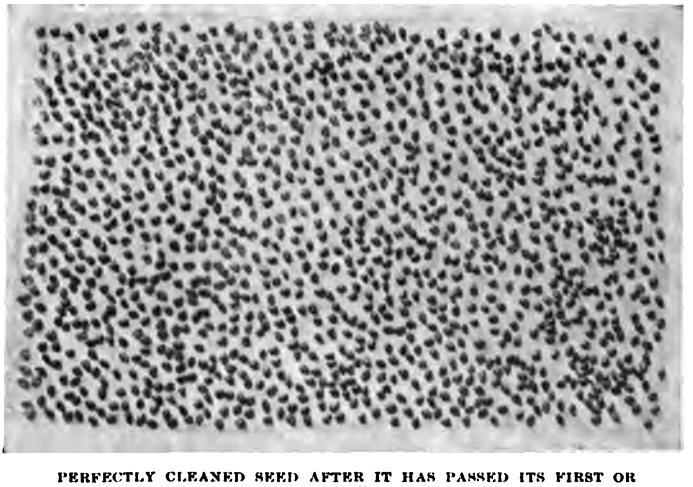
Even when some kinds of seed are delivered from the threshing-machine, they are no more fit to be sent out than if they were so much sawdust. Take clover seed, for example, which is never pure as it is grown naturally, therefore it is essential that every parcel of it should be thoroughly cleaned before passing into the hands of the farmer, who would otherwise unconsciously introduce into his land weeds of a pernicious brand that years of labour would fail to exterminate, so that the resultant crop, instead of being a source of profit, would be the cause of something more than loss.

VALUE OF BEGONIA SEED COMPARED WITH THAT OF MIGNONETTE SEED.

Comparative values shown by a photo from Nature. Begonia seed worth sixty times the mignonette seed.

Strange to say, certain weeds are peculiar to different varieties of seed, and the similarity of these pests in shape, size, and colour, to the seed they infest, is as astonishing as it is troublesome. But besides the weed seeds that infest every lot of clover as it comes from the thresher, there are other "foreign bodies," such as fibres of plants, particles of stone, earth, and scraps of wood. These are not only in themselves harmful to the crop, but in mere point of weight would prove a serious thing for the buyer of, say, 200 lb. of seed.

You would hardly know the clover seed after it has been perfectly cleaned by machinery of a very elaborate and costly kind, which extracts the weed seeds, and even feeble clover seeds, with a kind of unerring mechanical "instinct."



PERFECTLY CLEANED SEED AFTER IT HAS PASSED ITS FIRST OR "MACHINE" EXAM.

You would think the burglar a dull creature who broke into a great seed-growing establishment and made off with sacks of flower seeds, but, as I will show you presently, these may be worth many times their weight in gold. Many of the choicer strains are far too expensive to be treated in the ordinary way, and calceolaria seed is so minute that the actual cost of producing the finest strain exceeds ten

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PEAS AND BEANS ("CANDIDATES" FOR EXAMINATION) SOAKING IN WATER BEFORE GOING INTO THE GERMINATOR.

The peas and beans laid out above have been in germinator.

times the weight of the seed in pure gold!

I have never before seen the comparative values of seed shown in a photograph, but a unique photo of this kind was specially prepared for this article by some of the greatest experts in the world. The picture shows the value of begonia seed as compared with that of mignonette, the former being worth sixty times more than the latter. The outlay in growing double begonia seed is so great that a liberal allowance for a five shilling packet is measured in a tiny spoon with an outside diameter of three-sixteenths of an inch. And yet in that tiny spoonful there would be enough seed to produce more than one hundred stately begonia plants! Naturally such very minute and precious seed has to be handled with extreme care, and as a sudden draught from an open door would scatter perhaps one hundred pounds' worth, the counters where these seeds are being packeted are closed to traffic, and so arranged that not a puff of wind can ever enter. But not all precious flower seeds are minute as to bulk. For example, cineraria, cyclamen, gloxinia, and primula.

The curiosities of flower seeds are almost incredible. Of aster seed alone there are no less than one hundred and eighty-five varieties, including the different colours, and stocks are almost as numerous. Of sweet pea seeds you can have one hundred varieties.

Of course, it is obvious that our farmers are largely dependent for their crops and their prosperity upon the quality of their seeds, hence all the ingenious machinery that has been devised to separate the "sheep" from the "goats," so to speak, and even such fine-looking seeds as are delivered by the threshers are required to pass a very stringent examination, as we shall see. Every defective-looking vegetable seed that may have been passed by the machinery is removed separately by hand, and only one variety is dealt with at a time in the room, lest the "wheat"

A PEEP INTO GERMINATOR.

Every seed sprouting on wet blotting paper on to which seed throws clinging root.

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PRIMULAS FOR SEED, SHOWING HOW ALL FORCE OF EACH PLANT IS CAREFULLY CONCENTRATED INTO THE CENTRE TRUSS OF BLOOM FROM WHICH SEED IS OBTAINED.

and the "tares" should get mixed, with strange results.

The anxiety of the seed grower does not end when he has his seed tested and cleaned, for turnip, swede, and other round seeds have to be stored in special cool places, so as to prevent the depredations of a tiny insect which infests this class of seed, and which under a microscope looks exactly like a cheese-mite.

Very interesting is it to see unnumbered tons of seeds and great avenues of sacks, each labelled not only with its name, but also with a record indicating the particular farm from which the seed was secured.

In the bad old days, unproductive meadows and pastures used to be sown with the sweepings of hay-lofts, with the result that agriculturists of to-day are fighting against the resulting weeds and plants which they owe to their predecessors. Nowadays, however, regular scientific research is made as to the properties of grasses which are known to be fattening for beasts; and now that agriculture is a high science, seeds are produced and cultivated to this end, and every mixture of grasses and clovers is now made up with the precision of a doctor's prescription, according to the soil in view and the object of the sower.

But, after all, the great thing is to find out whether the seed has any life in it. Here, again, there are all kinds of curiosities. Mangel seed will show 160 to 170 per cent.

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PASSING A "PRELIM. EXAM." IN THE BIG SCHOOL: "INSPECTOR" GOING ROUND TO SEE HOW CANDIDATES ARE PROGRESSING.

of growth, and sometimes as much as 200 per cent. That is to say, almost every seed will give two growths! Then, again, sample lots of pea and bean seeds, if soaked in water previously, will show germination or otherwise reveal themselves in about forty-eight hours; whilst if not soaked, they will take at least four days. Celery, parsley, parsnip, and onion absolutely refuse to grow in a heated "germinator" such as coaxes the peas and beans into life, and, therefore, they have to be tested apart in a cool glass case in the testing-house or "examination hall." Lettuce, mustard-and-cress will germinate with extraordinary rapidity if soaked in water; but perhaps the most curious behaviour of all is that of the flower-seed known as portulaca, which is almost explosive in its energy, as germs of life will be visible in "candidates" in about two hours; oddly enough, the seed looks exactly like gunpowder! On the other hand, parsley seed is a slow and dull candidate at examinations, and twenty days at least must elapse before it shows any signs of life and is allowed to "pass." Seeds of the rose,

YOUNG "INSPECTORS" COUNTING OFF THE GROWTH OF SEEDS AFTER THEIR TESTING IN THE GERMINATOR.

Each lot of seeds that has passed has sprouted on wet blotting-paper.

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auricula, and violet are also slow and very erratic in germination.

In every case the seeds to be tested are counted, and a careful entry made of the date of the sowing. Then, as the germs appear, their number is recorded. To prevent error, the trials are duplicated, and in the event of conflicting results entirely repeated. The methods of testing are, of course, varied according to the characteristics of the seed; temperature and moisture are essentials, and must be uniform night and day. With most seeds it is pretty easy to find the percentage of germination by artificial means; but then you must remember that the seed grower has to get this most valuable information during the waning days of autumn, and in the low temperature of winter, when natural forces are practically inactive.

THE TEST IN EARTH.

A further and more searching test than the sprouting on wet blotting-paper. Each pupil labelled.

It is impossible to fix a hard-and-fast rule in connection with seed testing. Such a hardy subject as furze, for example, seldom or never yields so high a percentage of growth under glass as in the open ground.

In many cases a pinch of seed is sprinkled on to a small sheet of soaking wet blotting-paper, and then put into the germinator. In a few hours, or in a day or two, a peep into the "ovens" will show that the seed in bulk is all right, for its representative has "passed its exam." A few days later quite a little garden has sprung up on the scrap of blotting-paper, the plants being two or three inches high, and with strong clinging roots thrown out all over the surface. The rigidity and vitality of the little plants is quite extraordinary, as also is the grip they have upon the blotting-paper. The writer has amused

THE FINAL OPEN-AIR TEST.

The last "exam." Successful seeds nearing their "degree."

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himself with quite a little blotting-paper garden of beetroot, turnips, and many other plants, tested and forced in the germinator, and these may be kept in a room in a saucer of water for many days after they come out. Not all seeds, however, go into the germinator, for many other varieties are tested in earth, and yet others in the open air where desirable and possible. During the various tests of seed, "inspectors" go round, precisely as they would in a big school of children, to see how the candidates are progressing, and to keep an eye upon them generally. The candidates are—so to speak—awarded marks, and their behaviour praised or condemned according to their performance. Unremitting care and attention are lavished upon them, and finally they may be transplanted into the open air, where they pass their final "exam." with what may be truly termed "flying colours."

But the business is never really at an end, for experiments are constantly being made with (so to speak) the fathers and mothers of both farm and flower seeds. The hybridiser is at work in the hot-house all the year round, crossing new varieties and trying experiments of every kind. Then when he has succeeded in raising a glorious new variety, specimens of it are sent out and seed raised from the finest examples. One of the richest coloured primulas yet raised was obtained by crossing the pollen of the old lilac variety with a very handsome white flower. Yet, strange to say, subsequent attempts with similar parents all proved failures. Another curiosity was the crossing of gloxinia with gesnera. Fertile seed was obtained, but all the seedlings proved sterile and utterly declined to be propagated. In 1891 the seed of "Her Majesty"—a white gloxinia—was declared successful, but experiments had been commenced as far back as 1877. In that year the flower selected for the seed experiments was excellent in form and substance, but it had a pink band at the throat which the seed experts wanted to get rid of. Selection and crossing were continued year after year until the flower came true from seed as a pure white in 1891.

During the summer of 1888, a row of new late pea that was undergoing its "exam." produced a single pod which attracted a good deal of attention. This was marked and allowed to mature, and was in due course posted to one of the greatest experts in the country, who was in the North of England at the time. On its return the box was wrecked and every pea except one was damaged. From that single seed, however, a superb new variety was raised.

The experimental open-air grounds are the scene of yet another final examination, and it is well known to the inspectors who go round to report the progress of candidates, that a thin row of plants does not necessarily mean faulty seed, as birds, insects, mice, and ground vermin have much to answer for. The entries in the trial book, however, tell the whole history.

"SCHOLARS" THAT HAVE "PASSED" WITH FLYING COLOURS AND VINDICATED THE GENUINENESS OF ALL THE REST OF THEIR KIND.

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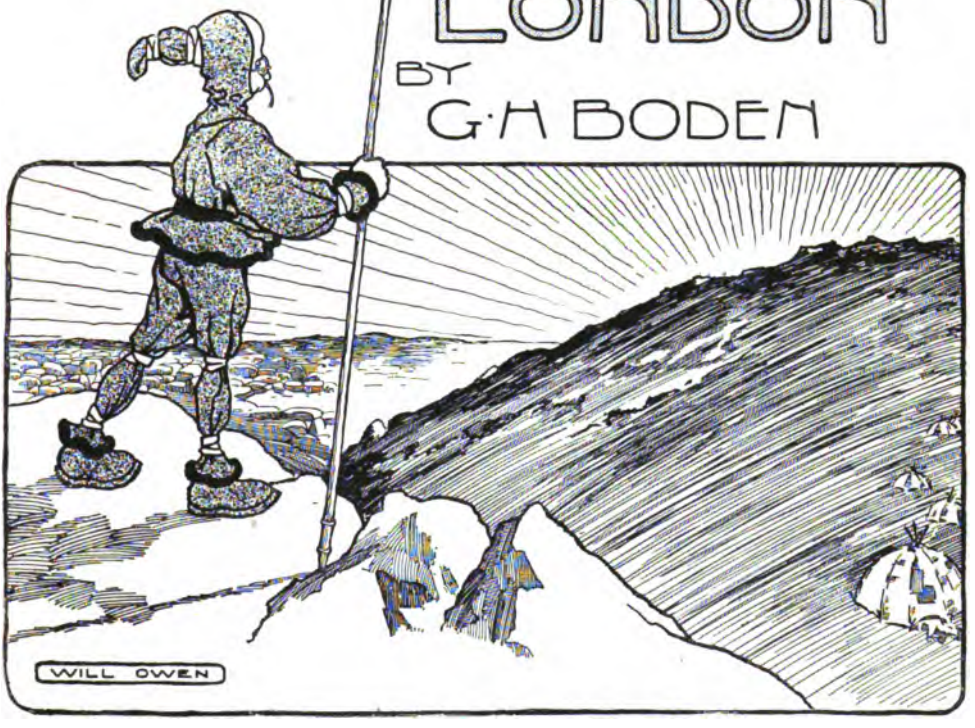
THE DISCOVERY OF LONDON BY G·A BODEN



(*Extract from the "North Pole Examiner" for June*, 209,323 A.D.)

AT last we are able to welcome Professor Storry's book on his wonderful discoveries below the sixtieth degree of latitude. The book is thorough and systematic. The reader will find briefly but lucidly set out therein the principal theories on the causes of ice ages, and the former shape and condition of the world, together with much learning on ocean currents, to review which we have neither space nor knowledge sufficient. We should like, however, to point out that in a footnote on page 257, Professor Storry states that only ·039 of the surface speed of a current will prevail at a depth of 2,200 yards after 10,000 years, and he gives no evidence for the rejection of the accepted ratio, which we have always understood to be ·037; perhaps the printer is responsible for the change. But who is responsible for the plate on page 490, which represents the common skua in mistake for the pomarine skua?

Our concern is not, however, with the earlier part of the book, nor with the excellent summary in Part II. of the results of the researches of the latter half of the century, which have brought to light so many traces of the early existence of man in Greenland, Siberia, and the North of America. We must pass at once to the astounding discoveries in the third part. Professor Storry had long maintained that the whole of Europe enjoyed a temperate climate at a time when the Polar Basin was covered with ice, and his expedition was undertaken in the hope of finding traces of early animal life, and possibly of the existence of man below the sixtieth degree of latitude. The expedition was successful beyond the wildest dreams of the most sanguine, and its results go far to confirm the authenticity of the remains found in the quaternary deposits of Spitzbergen. The expedition followed the line of march of the unhappy Captain Baxter and

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his party, whose remains they discovered in latitude 62, so that he had almost succeeded in crossing the great ice-field without knowing that he was so near to success. In latitude 58 traces of the breaking up of the ice began to appear, and the temperature became milder as the party proceeded southward, until on the fifty-third parallel they came to a stretch of clear country, opened apparently by a warm sea current, whose existence hitherto was unsuspected. The climate, though intensely cold, is yet capable of supporting life, and Professor Storry was not long in discovering signs that the country was inhabited. He determined, in spite of some difficulty with his men, many of whom were desirous of returning, to penetrate still further into the country, his perseverance being rewarded almost at once by the discovery of an encampment of natives. These people, who call themselves Anglanders, live in skin huts and display a certain amount of intelligence and civilisation. Their food is principally flesh and fish; their dress is composed of two garments of skin, the under one worn with the fur inwards, and the outer with the fur turned outwards. They are clean in their habits, are fond of their families, and seem to have few vices, though they are hot-tempered, and bloodshed is not uncommon. Physically they are strong and well developed, and the women are not repulsive. Their weapons and utensils are made of bone and wood, but they also use stone hammers, not unlike the axes of the Stone Age. There was nothing to indicate an earlier civilisation, so that it was by a pure accident that Professor Storry came across the celebrated steel knife which led to more searching investigations on the second expedition and to the great excavations which are still going on.

The first results of these excavations are common property; it has been established beyond a doubt that the Anglanders or Anglelanders possess a very ancient civilisation, unknown, indeed, to themselves, which will carry the history of the world back some hundreds or even thousands of years. Remains of a great city have already been found, and Professor Storry has actually brought back two statues—one of a man and the other of a woman, bearing the names "Oliver Cromwell" and "Aphrodite" respectively. These seem to belong to different periods, in themselves implying a great antiquity, since the dress in the case of the woman is of a more primitive pattern than in that of the man, though her face displays considerable refinement, and experts say that the nose, which is missing, must have possessed great delicacy of outline. One or two tablets have been discovered, which will be invaluable in ascertaining the language, or languages, since Professor Storry claims to have discovered two alphabets. One tablet, which appears to have been placed at the base of a statue or column, perhaps to commemorate a national victory, bears the signs—

PASSENGERS ARE REQUESTED
TO CROSS THE LINE BY THE BRIDGE.

It is too early yet to make guesses at the significance of these words, but we may perhaps assume PASSENGERS to be the name of the hero or deity to whom the statue was erected; it is unlikely that so long a word would be placed at the beginning of the inscription if it were not a proper noun. Another inscription of equal interest was carved in stone on the front of a temple. It seems to be a line of verse:—

PIT STALLS DRESS CIRCLE GALLERY.

Professor Storry is already hard at work on the first alphabet, and we may expect to hear more from him very shortly.

From representations on urns and vases, some of them of remarkable beauty, Professor Storry argues that the country must have enjoyed hot summers and cold winters, since many of the figures are entirely without clothing, while others are decorously robed. The art, so far as it is yet revealed, is of very uneven quality. Thus the plate on page 1254, representing a young man driving a chariot, shows both proficiency in drawing and a feeling for line, while the scene from a vase on page 1265, bearing the inscription—

A PRESENT FROM BLACKPOOL,

is primitive alike in design and execution. The utensils generally vary very much, both in workmanship and in form, their particular use being often a matter of speculation; such is the platter jar on page 1266, which has a stone lid capable of being held firm by a metal clamp, used perhaps as a receptacle for money or jewellery. Most remarkable of all, however, is a huge, unwieldy cylinder of thick metal with a long and narrow cavity, which is open at one end and terminates at the other in a small orifice on the side of the vessel. This seems as if it were intended for a water jug with a plug at the lower end, but it is not made to stand upright, nor would the quantity of water compensate for

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the awkward shape of the vessel. Professor Storry imagines it to have been used for some sort of game, since he found close to it a metal sphere which is just large enough to roll up and down the cavity. These old Anglelanders must have been giants indeed, if their playthings were of this pattern! But giants they were not, if one may judge by the skeletons hitherto recovered. Of these there are not many, for in the only burying place yet discovered there is a very large number of skulls, but there are few complete specimens. The explanation of this fact is at present wanting; it seems unlikely that the bodies were burned, for the bones of the complete skeletons are beautifully preserved, and even jointed together with couplings of wire, as if to preserve the identity of the dead—a practice which, so far as we know, has no parallel within human experience. The skulls are of varied shape, showing to all appearance a great diversity of race and many grades of intelligence. Professor Storry suggests that the inferior skulls belonged to slaves of other nations, whose bodies were burned at their masters' funerals, an explanation to which colour is given by the fact that there are among them also skeletons of animals, doubtless held sacred to the dead, including several apes, a hippopotamus, and a huge animal resembling an elephant, but far larger. We await fresh discoveries for the solution of this and other problems.

"The women are not repulsive."

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(*From the "North Pole Examiner" for January*, 209,325 A.D.)

We have received Professor Storry's new book on the excavations at County Council, as the great city of the Anglanders was called. The workers have brought to light a great quantity of statues and monuments, which are especially numerous in the neighbourhood of the burying place, where so many skulls were found. The work of classification has been very arduous, owing to the immense number of languages in different alphabets, which Professor Storry now believes to have belonged to conquered nations, whose monuments were barbarously carried away as trophies of victory. He has wisely confined himself to the study of the principal language of the Anglelanders themselves, and with this he has made considerable progress, aided by several important manuscripts, which are fortunately in an excellent state of preservation.

He has now proved beyond a doubt that the Anglelanders were a highly civilised race, possessing a great literature and an elementary knowledge of science. Their religion was polytheistic, the names of eleven gods having been discovered already; these are Jove, Cupid, Nelson, Hercules, Alhambra, Tivoli, Royal Aquarium, Victoria, Windsor Magazine, and Madame Tussaud's. They had also a strong belief in spirits, of whom Hamlet and Tararaboomdeay were the chief. A propitiatory hymn to the latter is among the priceless manuscripts in the Professor's collection, which also includes the fragment of a drama representing the machinations of the evil spirit Hamlet to wreck the peace of a virtuous family; assuming first one form and then another, he gradually ensnares the helpless creatures in his toils until he has destroyed them all. The Goddess of Victory is often represented on the face of coins, the reverse bearing a female figure seated on a wheeled car, which she is pushing along with a staff having three prongs at the upper end; she wears a soft hat, through the back of which her hair is allowed to escape in a graceful festoon so as to form a crescent moon. Hercules, who is generally called the torso, was the God of Strength and probably husband of Royal Aquarium, in whose temple he was worshipped. The Anglelanders seem to have been very superstitious in everything; they had a strong belief in charms. Thus we find it stated by one writer that eight ounces of rice at twopence, together with the same amount of treacle, provided that it be properly welded together and made sufficiently enticing, will drive away the *weasel* or evil spirit. Another writer gravely asserts that the family clock invariably ceases to work when the head of a family dies; and a herb named mistletoe was also used in some undescribed way as a charm. The religious rites, indeed, are a blot on their civilisation; heavy steam rollers have been found, the use of which is too horrible to contemplate, and also a gigantic wheel on which victims seem to have been bound and whirled round continuously until they died of starvation. Others, having first been bound hand and foot, were thrown into boats, which carried them swiftly down a steep incline to perish miserably in the water.

Two historical fragments have been recovered, and Professor Storry asks for assistance in determining the exact meaning of these. The first runs—

"remitted paper. There is no $2\frac{5}{16}$, still less $2\frac{3}{8}$, except for 6 months' paper. Money itself was easy at 1 to $1\frac{1}{4}$ p.c. for call loans, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ p.c. for week to week advances. Ease seems assured for a month at least. The continued weakness of Consols accentuates the fear about the future of money. Home Railway ordinaries were weak, with very little movement. John Jones's left off at 38 and African Gildeds rose $\frac{1}{4}$."

The Professor supposes this to be the description of a battle, though the language is very obscure, and the number of killed—38 only—is very small. In the other fragment, which follows, the language is more dignified, though still obscure.

"Hocker gave a palpable chance in the slips overnight and was occasionally beaten by the ball this morning. Jinks played clean and fine all through and showed a penchant for leg deflections. He delighted us with his driving and square cutting, playing several times naturally to the on, like other left-handers. He met Grace with easy aggressiveness and constantly drove Widgeon to the boundary. It was refreshing to see him give up hanging on his bat."

There can be no question that this describes a military manœuvre, since we know that the *bat* was a heavy war-club, which was grasped firmly by the shaft with both hands and brought down with a swinging motion on the enemy's head. But the most interesting manuscript, to our minds, is a letter from a woman of inferior position to a

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great magician. It illustrates in a striking manner the effect of fanaticism on simple minds. The woman relates how she had been smitten down for many years by a complication of nervous disorders, the details of which are described with evident enjoyment. She appears to have spent a considerable fortune in purchasing drugs, and it was only after the abandonment of all hope that she purchased one of the magic philtres of the wizard, her confidence in which completely restored her health. The letter concludes with a touch of humour, the writer stating her intention to compel all her acquaintances to buy philtres for her.

"Another inscription of equal interest was carved in stone on the front of a temple."

The Anglelanders had some mechanical skill and ingenuity, though they still used metal rails for their locomotives, and had little or no conception of road-making. One circumstance which puzzled Professor Storry for a long time was the extraordinary number of lamps. One of the first objects exhumed was a lamp fixed upon a metal column, and since that time he has discovered some scores of lamps of every size and pattern. The use of so many lamps, all of them capable of giving only a feeble light close to the ground, baffled the Professor's comprehension, until he remembered that the axis of the earth, instead of being horizontal, as at the present time, at the estimated date of the Anglelander civilisation

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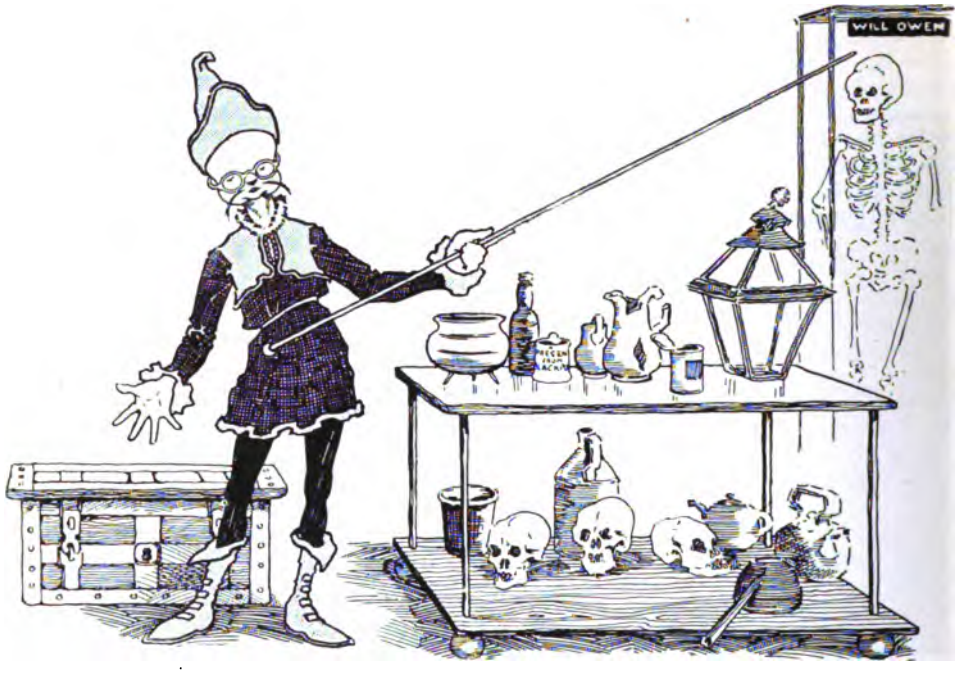

"He has now proved beyond a doubt that the Anglelanders were a highly civilised race."

was inclined to the plane of the orbit at an angle of 66°. The result was that Angleland, lying between the fiftieth and sixtieth degrees of latitude, would have constant alternations of light and darkness every twenty-four hours. They were satisfied, therefore, with a partial illumination of their cities, having no need for a great central light such as is necessary for us, who would otherwise live in darkness for six months at a time.

Of their social life we catch occasional glimpses only. They had their meals in common, sitting in parties of three or four at small tables fitted with marble tops; each district had one or more dining-halls furnished in this way, and every inhabitant was required to contribute a certain quantity of food at a fixed computation. The common store of food was then placed upon a great sideboard, from which each diner took as his hunger prompted him. After meals they assembled in great crowds in the temples, where solemn chants and mystic dances were performed, the audience keeping time by beating their hands together. An engraving on paper of such a scene, miraculously preserved, shows us the whole ceremony — the worshippers, some impassive and others excited by religious fervour, an attendant who hastens to carry a glass of water to one who is faint, and the dancer, who, in a costume rather convenient than elegant, is poised in a sort of ecstasy upon one foot. The faces of the people in this picture have a certain liveliness, but they do not exhibit the refinement of the statues and of the figures on the vases. We should be on our guard against interpreting too literally any of the work of these early nations. Many of their traditions evidently refer to natural phenomena. The story of the demi-god, Jack Horner, who sits afar in the corners of the earth devouring pastry, and proceeds to extract and hold aloft a single plum, obviously describes in allegorical language the rising of the sun, which would be a daily occurrence in Angleland at that period and could not fail to attract the attention of the poet. Similarly, the eclipse of the moon gives birth to the tale of the cow that jumped upon the moon in alarm at the strains of a violin played by a cat; while the tale of Mother Hubbard (on page 656 of Professor Storry's book) accurately represents the signs of the Zodiac. Happy Anglelanders, spinning your fairy tales in the cradle of the human race, groping blindly after the truth in your dim-lit streets! Well may we sigh for your childish dreams and groan beneath the weight of our boasted knowledge, which has banished the poetry of life and left us but a mechanical toy in its place!

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THE AVENUE, MIDDLEHARNIS, HOLLAND.

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THE TRAIL OF THE DEAD:

THE STRANGE EXPERIENCE OF DR. ROBERT HARLAND.

By B. FLETCHER ROBINSON and J. MALCOLM FRASER.*

III.—THE CHASE IN THE SNOW.

I HAVE endeavoured to give the facts of my strange story without omission or exaggeration. If I have failed, it is not from forgetfulness; for I do not think there is a single detail that is not permanently fixed in my memory. Even now I have but to shut my eyes to see the face of Marnac peer into my old rooms at Heidelberg, to stand once more trembling with terror in the desolate courtyard of Castle Oster, to drive through the blinding snow to where the body—— But enough. I do not forget.

I have already told you of the murder of Professor von Stockmar by his rival, Professor Marnac of Heidelberg, and of the discovery of the crime by my cousin, Sir Henry Graden, the well-known scientist and explorer, who was then my guest at that University. I have described the steps that led to our following the murderer to Lemsdorf, in German Poland, and the means by which he compassed the death of the unfortunate Mechersky. I have, moreover, laid before you the evidence that led my cousin to believe that Marnac was suffering from delusions, and that his extraordinary crimes were in revenge for certain harsh criticisms of a book on which he had spent many years of labour. In my last statement I traced the pursuit down to the station of Lemsdorf, where the murderer, flying from the scene of his revenge upon the Russian Professor, had been turned back from the railway by Mossel the lieutenant of the Heidelberg police, who had followed us to render assistance. Mossel, indeed, had waited by Marnac's luggage for six hours, but the man himself had failed to appear.

The winter's sun, chilled to a dusky ball, was dipping behind the snow-clad ridges to the eastward when we scrambled back into the sleigh. As our tired horses stumbled through the outskirts of the straggling wooden town, the shadows rushed across the sky as if flying the pursuit of the gale that shrieked amongst the houses. Night had fallen.

Surely we had him in our hands.

He had not fled by rail. Somewhere in the town he must be lurking, this grey-haired figure with the heart of a hunted wolf. The thought of it drove away the aches and cramps of exhaustion, and I sat bolt upright in my seat, staring into the gloom ahead, half expecting to see him move across the snow before us like a slinking beast of prey. We had decided to drive straight to our own inn, the "Goldner Adler," where, as we had discovered, Marnac, under the name of Wakefield, an English traveller, had also passed the previous evening. Little had we thought that the being we pursued, fresh from the murder of the man we had come to save, was sharing the same roof-tree. Perhaps there might be news of him at the "Goldner Adler." Reski, the tall, handsome Pole, who had about him more of the feudal knight than a country innkeeper, met us in the porch, bowing a stately welcome.

"You have had a bad drive, gentlemen," said he. "The wind has been fierce, and the snow, I fear, was heavy. Supper will be ready in half-an-hour."

"I believe a Mr. George Wakefield slept here last night," said Graden, dusting the clinging flakes from his outer wraps. "It is always pleasant to meet a compatriot. If he is still in the house, perhaps he will join us at our meal."

"Herr Wakefield! No, mein Herr, he has not yet returned."

"So, he has gone out?"

The innkeeper hesitated, glancing uneasily at his questioner. He was evidently in some uncertainty of mind.

"He is a strange man, the Herr Wakefield: though, perhaps, for an Englishman——"

"He is not more mad than usual, eh, Mr. Landlord?" laughed Graden.

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"Mein Herr, it was not my intention to speak thus of your great people," apologised the man. "If he has surprised us, it is doubtless because we, being ignorant country-folk, do not understand his customs."

"Why, what has he been about?"

"Well, mein Herr, it is this way. After you had started for your drive to the house of the Professor Mechersky, Herr Wakefield came running down from his room with many questions concerning you. He seemed sorry that you had gone without seeing him. He then paid his bill with the liberality of the English, who are indeed a great and generous nation, and commanded that his luggage should be carried to the station for the midday train. At eleven he himself set out for the station upon foot. We were sorry to lose so good a guest. What, then, mein Herr, was our surprise when a little after twelve he reappeared, having ridden back upon the sleigh that had taken his baggage to the station! The man who drove it told me that Herr Wakefield had left his baggage upon the platform unregistered, and that he had seen a stranger standing by it as if in charge."

Graden glanced at Mossel, who grinned luminously.

"Proceed, Mr. Landlord," he said.

"He had only peeped into the station and left at once, the man said. He demanded of me a sleigh and good horses, but the best I had were with you, and it was necessary to send for others from a neighbour. He was very impatient of the delay, using angry words. At last he drove away, and he has not returned."

"Then, turning it slowly back, he drove a pin through the thin paper at the spots immediately above the indentations on the page below."

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"Who went with him?"

"Ivan, my eldest son."

"Did he say where he was going?"

"No, mein Herr; only I heard him cry to Ivan to follow the eastern road which is towards the Russian frontier."

"And while he waited for the horses, what did he do?"

"As I have said, at first he abused me roundly for the delay. Indeed, mein Herr, I was surprised at his knowledge of German, for before he had spoken it very badly. For the rest, he sat by himself, reading, in the best room."

"Please to show us there."

We tramped in single file after the landlord through the ill-lit passages to the "best room," a parlour set aside for important guests. It seemed a peculiarly inartistic apartment, with green wall-paper and angular chairs covered with purple antimacassars. On the central table stood a lamp, and beside it lay a number of those dingy books that seem common to inns of all nations. Graden made for them at once, and as he sorted through the pile of time-tables, catalogues, and trade-papers, we stood watching him in surprise. Suddenly he stopped in his search with a little grunt of satisfaction, and drawing a chair to the table, sat down. I looked over his shoulder. He was actually reading a German Baedeker!

"Doubtless you are planning a picnic-party?" I suggested, with as much sarcasm as I could put into the question.

"I know you are tired and hungry, my good Robert," he answered; "but please keep quiet."

He had reached "Lemsdorf"—I could see the name at the top of the page—and now was turning the leaves very slowly. Suddenly he held up the Baedeker to me.

"Do you see that?" he asked sharply.

A jagged line of paper ran along the inner crease of the guide-book. The map of the district had been torn away!

Mossel thrust me gently aside and, bending over, examined the under page thus left exposed. He took the book from Graden's hands and, carrying it to the lamp, continued his scrutiny.

"You are quite right, Mossel," said my cousin. "His pencil had a sharp point."

"You have a keen eye, Herr Graden," grinned the policeman. "In our business you would have made some reputation."

"This is a new edition. How long have you had it?" asked my cousin of the innkeeper.

"But a few days, mein Herr."

"And have you been visited by any tourists in that time?"

"No, mein Herr."

"Then this should make it a certainty, for I have a Baedeker of my own upstairs. One moment, while I fetch it."

Graden's chair toppled to the ground as he rose. In three strides he was out of the door. I turned to Mossel with a demand for an explanation.

"Wait till Herr Graden returns," he grunted sulkily.

I have the strongest objection to those silly tricks of secrecy with which the professional police endeavour to magnify their most simple discoveries. I was speaking my mind strongly on the subject when my cousin reappeared.

"Hallo! what's the matter?" he asked. I explained the position, while the fat German chuckled in an oily, irritating manner.

"Is not the official always the same?" said Graden, with a grim smile. "Come to the light, Robert, and I'll explain."

It was certainly an ingenious discovery they had made. Upon the page upon which the map should have rested were several slight indentations, evidently the result of marks made upon the lost paper by a pencil with a fine point. With great care my cousin tore out the corresponding map from his guide-book and fitted it into the vacant place. Then, turning it slowly back, he drove a pin through the thin paper at the spots immediately above the indentations on the page below.

"The devil take him!" he cried. "Look, Mossel. This doesn't help us, after all."

It was true enough. The pin-pricks showed, first, Lemsdorf; then a cross-road some ten miles to the east; and then Bromberg, to the north, on the Berlin-Thorn, and Gnesen, to the south, on the Posen-Frankfurt railways. He had evidently been measuring and calculating indecisively.

"Do not trouble yourself, Herr Graden," said Mossel, with a wave of the hand that had more than a suggestion of patronage. "There are still telegraphs. I will have him detained at whichever place he reaches. I shall return in half an hour—to a good supper, I trust, Mr. Landlord."

We followed him to the outer door, which opened to a writhing wilderness of snow-flakes, for the fall had recommenced. The policeman turned up his collar with a grunt of disgust and melted into the darkness. We turned to meet the face of the

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"'It is Ivan, my son!'"

landlord, white and drawn with a terrible anxiety.

"My son!" he gasped. "What of my son?"

"Heaven pardon me!" cried Graden, "I had forgotten him!"

"This man he drove, that is about to be arrested—is he a criminal? Do not spare me, mein Herr."

"Your servant—our driver to-day—will be telling the tale in your kitchen, of the death of the Professor Mechersky, of Castle Oster. This man, whose name is Marnac, killed him. That is why we pursue. Yet, my friend, I see no danger for your son, unless——"

"Unless what, mein Herr?"

"Unless he refused to assist in the escape of the murderer."

"He is an honest boy, a good boy, but very stubborn. His horses were borrowed; he had promised to return them to-night. He would never consent to drive this man to Bromberg or Gnesen, which is at least an eighteen hours' journey. Oh, mein Herr, mein Herr! what is happening—out there in the snow?"

"We are in the hands of Providence, my friend," said my cousin gravely, laying his hand on the landlord's arm. "You can do nothing but pray that it may be well with the boy."

I was very sorry for Reski. As I made my toilet in my room upstairs, the danger of his son grew upon me. Fate, accident, Providence—whatever you choose to call it—is a strange thing, for indeed it chooses its victim with a fine impartiality. When I entered our supper-room, I found my cousin equally disturbed.

"This is a bad business about the landlord's son," he said. "I've a good mind to

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follow the sleigh, though it's little good that would do."

"It's an awful night," I grumbled, for indeed the wind was shrieking in the roof like a lost soul.

"You're a queer chap, Robert, with your confounded mannerisms," he said. "Yet I'll wager you'd be the first to be off into the storm in a matter of life and death."

It was not exactly complimentary, but I let it pass.

Mossel was delayed. It was close upon twenty minutes more before he arrived, a snow-swathed, stamping bear of a man, whose curses preceded him as he rolled down the passage to our room.

"What's up, Mossel?" Graden demanded sharply.

"The wires, mein Herr Graden, the wires! *Potztausend!* but this storm has brought them down like clothes-lines."

"A special train, then."

"They have not an engine in the shed. I have been to see; it was that which delayed me."

Graden drew a sheet of paper from his pocket and glanced at it swiftly.

"There is not a train till ten in the morning," he said. "He will be at Bromberg, which is the nearer town, by eleven at latest. This is a branch line, and we could not get there under three hours. It is now seven. An old man as he is could hardly travel through such a night without stops for food. Again, this lad who drove him may have refused to proceed. We must chance it, my friends, and follow."

"I thought you had already so decided when I saw the sleighs at the door," said Mossel.

"Sleighs, Mossel? I ordered no sleighs!"

"Well, they're there. Two troikas with three good horses apiece. Come and see for yourself."

The policeman had spoken the truth. On the leeward side of the porch two sleighs were waiting. The light from the open door behind us shimmered on the drifting snow and flashed on the bells about the horses' necks. It was bitterly cold, and I was turning to retreat into the hall when a man wrapped in furs moved out of the darkness. It was the keeper of the inn, his face grey-white, like the underside of a sole.

"'Stop, or I fire!'"

"Whose sleighs are these?" asked Graden sharply.

"Mine, Mr. Englishman, mine. I follow to save my boy."

"And the horses?"

"The best in Lemsdorf. They are private teams, lent by those who had pity upon my sorrow."

"May we come with you?"

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"I would ask for nothing better, mein Herr."

Inside of ten minutes I was ready to start, with a borrowed cloak flung over my thickest clothes, and a huge hunch of bread-and-meat in my hand. Quick as I had been, Mossel and my cousin were already dressed and in consultation. We were to drive to the cross-roads, they told me, and then separate, the one sleigh, with Graden, Mossel, and an experienced driver, taking the road to Bromberg, which, being the shorter, was more likely to be the one Marnac had chosen; the other, containing the innkeeper and myself, was to follow the Gnesen road. I was not particularly pleased at the prospect of parting with my friends, but I made no objection to this plan. We entered our sleighs, rolling ourselves in the rugs.

"Are you armed?" Graden called across to the innkeper in his little seat before me.

"Yes, mein Herr. Do you go first, for you have the better team."

The chase was up indeed!

As we passed on to the plain outside the town, the gale that came charging out of frozen Russia leapt upon us with a howl of furious joy. The flakes that rose from beneath the curved runners and the beating hoofs fled spinning into the night. The sky hung low and black and starless above the white sheet of rolling snow. The little sleigh-bells grew silent in the heavier drifts, breaking out again where the track was harder. A hundred yards ahead the sparks of Graden's pipe flashed as they kindled in the wind. The fall had almost ceased.

My driver sat squarely before me, with a rein in each of his fur-gloved hands. I could not see his face, but from his projecting head and hunched shoulders I could imagine how he looked, peering over his horses into the night, with fear gripping at his soul.

I must admit that for myself I was in a condition of petulant discomfort. The slightest movement seemed to give entrance to some new draught that chilled my arm or ran trickling down my spine. Now and again a flake of snow lodged in my neck or ear and melted icily. Tired, cold, and hungry, I lay amid my rugs, cursing the folly that had led me to take a hand in a business that should have been left to the police. I had the keenest desire for a quarrel, but being to all conversational purposes alone, that relief was impossible.

Within two miles of Lemsdorf we had left the plain for the forest. The moon was obscured, yet a faint light filtered down from above, finding a reflection in the snow, and emphasising the black pillars of the pines that went sliding by. There was now no trace of our companions save the marks of their runners on the track; over the woods brooded an utter silence, broken only by the swish of our sleigh and the murmur of the bells rising and falling in a low, monotonous melody. It was as if we were passing through the waste places of a dying world. One of my feet began to grow numb, and when I turned about that I might shelter it, the snow that had gathered on my collar plunged down my neck, so that I shivered with cold. But on the whole I was reasonably warm amongst my wraps, and a feeling of drowsiness grew upon me.

It was Reski's voice that woke me. We had halted in a dim clearing in the woods. A score of yards away the second sleigh was waiting. Evidently we had reached the cross-roads, where we were to part.

"Any tracks?" shouted my driver.

"No," came Graden's answer. "The wind and the fresh fall have cleared them away. Are you all right, Robert?"

"I am exceeding uncomfortable, if that is what you want to know," I shouted back. Indeed, it was a silly question to ask me. My temper was not improved by a distant chuckle which I attributed to Mossel.

"Cheer up, Robert!" continued my cousin. "If you run across him, you must do your best. Reski will see you through, never fear; but I don't think there is much chance of your coming up with him, for he will have taken the shorter route which we follow. Anyhow, remember that the rendezvous is at the 'Drei Kronen,' at Thorn. If you catch him, telegraph there; if the wires are down, send a messenger. Do you understand?"

"You are perfectly lucid."

"Well, good-bye."

The snow spurted from under their horse's hoofs as they swung on to the north road. Then my driver shouted to his team, and we, too, rushed forward, but on the other track curving south and east. For a minute I could hear their bells tinkling an echo in the distance. Then they died away into silence.

My interest in the chase suddenly expanded. Now that my cousin had deserted me, it seemed an ugly, dangerous business. Marnac would stop at nothing, that was certain. Supposing we should chance upon this desperate maniac, what then? My driver was armed, and had the appearance of a bold,

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courageous man. Was he so in reality? I stared up at his back and wondered.

We had travelled the half of a mile, when from the black of the forest before us rose a cry, a fierce, chuckling bay that sent the horses plunging across the road. In the solitude of those ice-bound woods it sounded the more threatening, the more utterly malignant. I sprang to my feet, gripping Reski by the shoulder.

"What is that?" I cried.

"Wolves, mein Herr."

"Will they attack us?"

"Calm yourself, mein Herr," he answered gruffly, his eyes still set on the track before him. "The winter is young, and their bellies are not empty. There is no danger."

The pace of the horses had dropped to a slow trot. They advanced stiffly, with staring eyes and ears pricked forward. I remained standing, peering across the driver's seat at the white track that ran dimly away between the banks of pines.

Suddenly from a snow-powdered thicket before us there burst a chorus of low snarls that grew into the short, angry barks of dogs disturbed. With a jerk the horses stopped, trembling and squeezing themselves together with the fear that was on them.

"They have something there," cried Reski, and there was a shudder in his voice. "Otherwise they would not be so bold. Take the reins, mein Herr."

He thrust them into my hands and jumped from the seat. His pistol flashed, and I caught a glimpse of forms scurrying over the snow. Then the darkness fell again like a veil.

"What have you found?" I shouted.

"Under the trees it is hard to see," came back his answer. "Perhaps—I was mistaken. But wait."

He struck a match, and his tall, thin figure sprang out in silhouette as he moved slowly forward, shielding the light with his hands.

"Here are the footprints of the wolves . . . it was here that they were gathered. There is something by the tree. . . . It is not a log—*mein Gott!* but it is not a log, though it lies so still. . . . I fear to approach—how I fear! Have mercy! It is a man! It is Ivan, my son!"

We were on Marnac's trail—the trail of the dead.

* * * * *

At last it was all over. Alone, for I dared not leave my hold upon the frightened horses, Reski carried his son to the sleigh and laid him there beside me, with a rug across the face. He had been killed from behind, poor lad, with a revolver shot in the back of his head. He had refused to proceed, and Marnac had not hesitated. That was plain enough. I thanked God that we had been in time—to save him from the wolves.

Yet there had been but a short delay. For when Reski had seen his dead bestowed upon the sleigh, he had taken the reins and sent his horses forward. He did not speak, nor did I offer him consolation. But as I watched him sitting above me, peering ahead like some old teak figure on a vessel's bows, there was a grim intensity about the man, a fixed resolve that was strange to witness. So we fled through the night, down the interminable avenues of pines, bearing our dead with us.

It was one o'clock when we lit upon a wayside inn. Our clamour aroused the landlord, who directed us to where a kettle simmering on the stove gave a warm mash for the horses and hot brandy for ourselves. He was sleepily incurious, nor did he inquire what was the thing beneath the rugs which we carried with us. But he gave us news. Marnac had left there less than two hours before. He had been greatly delayed by a collision with a tree, and some rough repairs had been necessary. One of his horses, too, had been slightly lamed. Yet Reski showed no unusual interest in the tale we heard. He spent his time with his horses, grooming and soothing them. It was not till they had rested three-quarters of an hour that he called me out from my seat by the stove, and again we swept away upon the chase.

It was at dawn that we sighted him. He was climbing a long slope, a black speck in the white riband of a road. Above him, long flakes of orange cloud were slowly brightening and deepening in colour. As he topped the hill, the sun came peering up over a moorland heaped with tumbled drifts. The sky flushed and faded to a deep cobalt blue. So day came.

It almost seemed as if our horses understood. They increased their pace without a touch of the whip, tugging at the frozen, twisted reins. As they, too, rose the hill, Reski shouted to them, and they stepped briskly forward. The fresh snow had frozen, and we travelled well, the surface crackling as we crushed over it. We were less than a quarter of a mile from him when he turned and noticed us. We saw him spring to his feet and lash his team, but the off-side horse was running stiffly and his pace scarcely

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"'There is the murderer, mein Herr!'"

increased. He leant down, fumbling and searching at his feet, while he held the reins in one hand. After that he did not hurry, but drove steadily forward, glancing at us now and again over his shoulder.

We drew up swiftly four hundred yards, three hundred yards, one hundred—— And then, with a short, fierce bark of rage, the Pole dragged out his revolver and fired. As he did so, the sharp hum of a bullet, like the buzz of an angry bee, fled over us. I ducked my head at the sound; but I give myself the credit of saying that I poked it up again the next moment.

"May the Fiend grip him, but he has a Mauser pistol!" cried Reski, and I saw that the weapon in his own hand was of the common bull-dog make. "At this range I can do nothing against him."

He lashed his horses, and they plunged gallantly forward. I could see that Marnac had stopped his sleigh and was cuddling his weapon with a perfect coolness. Even at that distance I seemed to feel the goggling murder in his eyes.

Zip! zip! He had missed again!

Thung! I saw one of the galloping horses stagger, and then his head and shoulders seemed to fall away, as if he had dropped forward into a hole. There was a bumping and a twisting wrench, the snow by the roadside seemed to spring up at me, and the next instant I was struggling in cold, blinding darkness.

I wriggled out from the drift, gasping,

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with the flakes in my mouth and eyes. The sleigh was twisted across the road, half covering the dead horse. The other two had scrambled to their feet and now stood shivering, with drooping heads. The fall had knocked the heart clean out of them. Reski lay beside them, huddled where he had fallen. Eighty yards away Marnac had stopped and was watching us. He seemed satisfied with what he saw, for presently he turned and, lashing his team, trotted on down the road.

I don't suppose it was more than a couple of minutes before Reski came round, though it seemed long enough to me. He had got a nasty thump on the head, but as a matter of fact his wrist turned out to be the more serious business, being very badly sprained indeed. I made a sling out of a neck-wrap and fixed him up as well as I was able. The man had a remarkable vitality, besides brute courage, for, the moment I had finished, he walked over and examined the sleigh.

It looked hopeless enough. One of the runners had been torn almost clean away, and the central part was badly cracked. The body of the poor lad Ivan lay on its back in the roadway, staring up at the sky. I threw a rug over it.

"Well, we can't go on, that's certain," I said.

"Not in the sleigh, mein Herr," he answered calmly.

"And how else?"

"There are the horses, one for each. When you have freed them of their harness, I will ask you to assist me to mount."

There was no good arguing with him, and I was ashamed to seem less eager than a man in his crippled condition. With his clasp knife I cut the twisted traces away and freed them of their collars. At his direction I dragged the body of Ivan into the sleigh and left him there decently covered.

Reski mounted from the stump of a tree, to which I led the stronger of the pair. I was a fairly good rider, but I was excessively stiff from my long drive, and not a little shaken by my fall. My beast seemed to have the sharpest knife-bone of a back that Nature ever gave to horseflesh. But, after all, there was nothing to be gained by grumbling. Perhaps I was growing wiser by painful experience.

A curious pair we must have looked that morning. Reski, with his arm in a sling, and the butt of his revolver peeping from his waist-belt, would have made as good a stage brigand as need be. For myself, I was in too much of immediate pain from the jolting trot of the brute I rode to carry a formidable appearance. I could never have imagined that a horse lived with such adamantine fetlocks as mine seemed to possess.

I have no exact record of the time, but I should imagine that it was about half an hour later that we sighted Marnac again. He was then a good three-quarters of a mile ahead, but travelling leisurely. Also, I was very glad to notice that we were free of the waste lands, and that the spire of a church was poking out amongst some poplars ahead of him. He would never dare to use his revolver a second time when men were about. Also, we might procure another sleigh and team.

Reski sent his heels into his horse, and we quickened our pace, though the poor brutes were getting very done and drove heavily along with hanging heads. It was about then that I noticed a man behind us.

We were topping a slight rise when I looked round. He was then some distance in our rear, but coming up fast. As far as I could make out, he was in a sort of uniform and well mounted. The possibility of official help was very pleasant.

We were gaining on Marnac, who had not yet noticed us.

With kicks and curses from Reski, and the application of a hazel branch from myself, we had squeezed a lumbering gallop out of our horses. The sleigh was not more than one hundred yards away. Reski gripped his reins in his teeth and drew his revolver.

"Stop, there! Stop, I say, in the name of the law!"

It was the man from behind who hailed us, but we rode on.

"Stop, or I fire!"

I pulled up. I don't think it was very cowardly when you think of it. Besides, I was anxious to explain.

Reski rode on.

The man who had shouted flashed by me, travelling at an easy gallop. He was dressed in a neat green uniform and carried a drawn revolver.

Reski rode on.

It was all over in a moment. The stranger cried another warning, to which the Pole answered with a snarl over his shoulder. The next instant there was a sharp report, and Reski's horse pitched forward, throwing his rider clear. He was then scarcely thirty yards from Marnac's sleigh.

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The Pole was not hurt apparently, for despite his injured arm he scrambled to his feet in an instant. But he had lost his revolver in his fall and was helpless. He began a furious explanation in his national tongue, dropping the hated language of his Teuton conquerors.

"Speak in German, you Polish dog!" growled his captor, and then turning on me as I rode up—

"Here, you," he said, "dismount and stand by your accomplice. If you resist, I shoot!"

I obeyed. From his manner he was without doubt a policeman. Also I respect the law.

"Now, you," he said, addressing me, "explain, if you can, who is that man you shot and left in the broken sleigh down yonder. Remember, it is against you that you have already tried to escape and refused to surrender?"

"There is the murderer, mein Herr!" I cried, pointing to Marnac's sleigh, now rapidly vanishing. "We were chasing him. Go after him at once, or he will get away."

The policeman laughed long and loud.

"A pretty tale!" said he. "This dog of a Pole here has been in mischief, without doubt; and you, you who are——"

"An Englishman," I said proudly.

"Aha! perhaps you thought you were once more murdering the helpless Boer. A Pole and an Englishman! *Mein Gott!* it is no wonder that together they hatched some devilish contrivance."

It was no use to make a further appeal. Reski had seen that already. Side by side we tramped through the snow, with our captor and his ready pistol behind us. In half an hour we had reached the village we had seen ahead, and were lodged in a cell infamously damp and cold. All communication with our friends was refused till the arrival of some local magistrate.

As eleven o'clock hammered from the steeple outside, Reski raised his head from his chest and glared across at me.

"He will have arrived at Gnesen," he said. "There is a great choice of trains."

It was true enough. Marnac had escaped us once again.

TRIUNITY.

THOU knowest how I loved the man I thought
Thou wert, but who I learned to see
Had never been. Ah, lost dream-love who brought
Such blissful hours and days to me!

I may not wholly love the man thou art,
Whose being is my misery,
But dearer far than all the world my heart
Doth hold that man thou yet couldst be!

URSULA ARNOLD.

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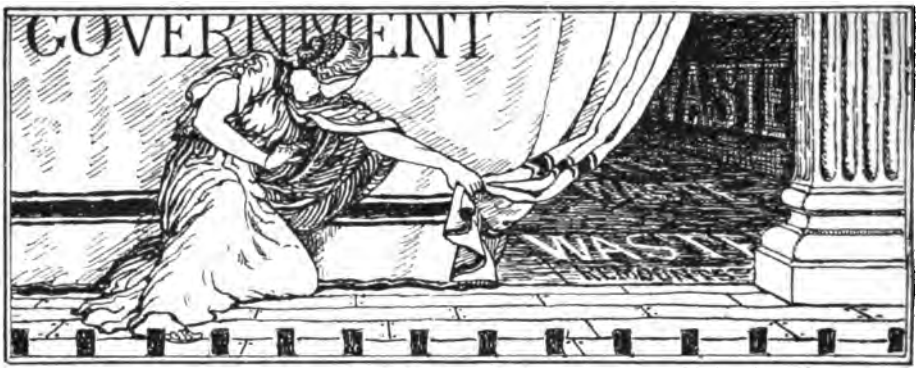

THE WASTE OF PUBLIC MONEY.

By Ernest E. Williams,

Author of "The Imperial Heritage," "Made in Germany," "Marching Backward," and "The Foreigner in the Farmyard."

No. III.—CORDITE AND EXPENSIVE FAVOURITISM.

Note.—I wish at the commencement of each of these articles to remove a possible cause of misapprehension. It is necessary, in the course of them, to say hard things of members of the present Government; but that is because the present Government has been in office for a number of years beyond which, in order to keep the illustrations of bureaucratic methods up to date, it has not been thought desirable to travel. Criticisms involving the acts of Ministers are not to be interpreted as in any sense a party attack, and it is not suggested that had the Opposition been in office, its members would have done better.—E. E. W.

LET us now press the charge home a point further. War, the apologists may say, is an exceptional occurrence, and blunders which may be committed in the rush and strain of war-time must not be regarded as typical procedure of all time. The contention may serve up to a point; but what I have previously written shows that it will not serve all the way, even confining our view to the War Contract scandals. In the case of the Meat Contracts, some of the unbusinesslike procedure which we have noted is dated at periods subsequent to the first months of rush and strain; in the case of the Remount scandals, it was evident that had the Department and its work been efficiently organised in peace time, the scandals would never have occurred—at least, could not have occurred upon the same scale.

But let us leave the war altogether. Let us take an illustration from a scandal for which its apologists cannot plead the rush and strain of war-time—where we come indubitably into the region of permanent mismanagement. I would direct your attention to the Cordite Contracts.

When, in 1894, the War Office requested tenders for the manufacture of the then new explosive, cordite, only three firms responded—the National Explosives Company, Kynochs, and Nobel's; and the prices of the two former were only about two-thirds of that asked by the last-named. It was natural in these circumstances that the National Explosives Company and Kynochs should get a warm place in the Admiralty's heart, as they were the first to make reasonable tenders, and, as time went on, and work was placed in their hands, the Government looked upon them as firms experienced in satisfying its wants, and therefore specially eligible for further contracts. This state of things helps to explain, though it does not justify, the extraordinary story which I am now about to tell.

As time passed on, it should be premised, other manufacturers of explosives applied themselves to the making of cordite, and soon a healthy competition arose, a competition which the Government should, in the interests of economy and efficiency, have hailed, notwithstanding any sentimental or

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other tendency it might have felt towards standing by the original caterers, Messrs. Kynochs and the National Explosives Company—Kynochs in particular. Now let us see the sort of welcome which was extended to this competition.

In January, 1900, tenders were invited from the firms on the War Office list for 2,240,000 lb. of cordite for the Admiralty. (Admiralty orders go through the War Office.) Seven firms sent in tenders for the whole or part of the cordite. It would take up too much space here to reproduce the particulars of all the tenders, as there were eight different sizes of cordite, with different prices for each, and various other particulars which make up a complicated table. But you will get at the essential features of these tenders as I go along.

In analysing them for the purpose of arriving at the best, one pays regard to three essential requirements: (1) cheapness; (2) time of delivery; (3) quality.

With regard to cheapness. The National Explosives Company was the cheapest in all the sizes for which it tendered. Nearly half the entire order was for sizes 30 and 20, and in these sizes only did Kynochs compete. Let me set out the prices of the various tenders for size 30.

New Explosives Co. . .	2*s.* 4*d.*	per lb.
Nobel's Explosives Co. .	2*s.* 3*d.*	,,
Chilworth Gunpowder Co.	2*s.* 3*d.*	,,
Cotton Powder Co. . .	2*s.* 0*d.*	,,
Curtis & Hardy . . .	2*s.* 4*d.*	,,
National Explosives Co. .	1*s.* 10½*d.*	,,
Kynochs	2*s.* 6*d.*	,,

for whole quantity, 2*s.* 9*d.* and 3*s.* for smaller quantities.

The size 20 tenders were of a similar character. Clearly, then, on the score of cheapness, Kynochs should have been ruled out altogether, and as the National Explosives Company tendered only for 1,000,000 lb. out of a total of 2,030,000 lb. in the sizes for which they competed, the orders for sizes 30 and 20 should have been divided between the National Explosives Company and the Cotton Powder Company, so far as price only was the deciding factor.

With regard to the time of delivery, the best offer was that made by Nobel's Explosives Company, which offered to deliver from 10,000 lb. to 20,000 lb. per week commencing after forty days from receipt of the order. The National Explosives Company offered to deliver 20,000 lb. per week from the 31st of March, and Kynochs 44,800 lb. per week from the 8th of April. The Cotton Powder Company, on the other hand, only offered 8,000 lb. to 20,000 lb. per week from the 26th of August. This comparative slowness of delivery, of course, has to be set against the cheapness of the Company's offer. At the same time, there does not appear to have been any particular hurry for large quantities of the cordite, and if the order had been divided between the Cotton Powder Company and one or more of the other companies which offered quicker delivery, the Admiralty would not have had its stores depleted while waiting for the delivery of the Cotton Powder Company's order. And with regard to Kynochs' offer of large deliveries in a comparatively short time, we shall see later, when considering their past record, that compliance with delivery arrangements was not that firm's strong point.

With regard to quality, from a report of Colonel Hadden, dated the 30th of March, 1900, it appears that the National Explosives Company, besides being the cheapest and one of the quickest in the delivery which it offered, also, in respect to its previous record, manufactured most successfully. Colonel Hadden reported that this firm had "been very successful all round, especially in the larger sizes, compared with other contractors. I have had no trouble with this firm." (The larger sizes, be it noted, are the most difficult.) The Cotton Powder Company was reported "recently successful with sizes 30 and 5, and better with 20 after a great many failures." Concerning Nobel's, Colonel Hadden reported that they were unsuccessful with size 50, and very successful with size 5, though he added a postscript that "two lots of Nobel's size fifty were proved yesterday and passed," showing that with experience this firm was getting its manufacture right. With regard to the high-priced Kynochs, Colonel Hadden reported: "Unsuccessful with 50, 44, and 30; fairly successful with sizes 20 and 5. Taking all sizes, the proportion of accepted to rejected on present contracts is 46 to 54 per cent. The foreign matter found in a great number of lots during May and June was very unsatisfactory. The large quantity of cordite sent me within the last ten days cannot be considered satisfactory, while the Company give trouble regarding marking and small details." Thus it will be seen that Kynochs did not make up in superior quality for their high prices. But the relative merits of some of the firms, according to Colonel Hadden's report, will perhaps be most conveniently

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seen by tabulating the proportion of acceptances to rejections of the cordite sent in by them. Thus :—

	Proportion rejected.
Kynochs . . .	54 per cent.
National Explosives Co. .	31 „
Cotton Powder Co. . .	11 „

The Cotton Powder Company's very small proportion of rejections should, however, be read in connection with the fact that it chiefly makes the small sizes, which are the easiest.

Now we come to the distribution of the orders. The Director of Army Contracts recommended allocation among each of the seven competing firms. The National Explosives Company, though, as we have seen, the most suitable competitor, and though tendering for 1,000,000 lb., received orders for 880,000 lb. only ; and Kynochs, though not given any order for the size 30 they tendered for, were yet awarded the whole of the 160,000 lb. which were required of size 20. From this it will be gathered that Kynochs were treated more favourably than a strict regard to business would seem to permit.

But the Admiralty would not accept this recommendation. It knocked out all firms except the National Explosives Company and Kynochs, allotting to the former Company 1,350,000 lb. (though it had only tendered for 1,000,000 lb.), and to Kynochs 880,000 lb. of size 20, at 2*s.* 3*d.* per lb. The Admiralty went to Kynochs and told them they might have this big order if they would reduce their price to 2*s.* 3*d.* ; all the while the other firms which tendered at 2*s.* 3*d.* and less were left out in the cold. Nobel's got to hear of this extraordinary proceeding, and telegraphed on the 8th of March to the Director of Army Contracts, expressing disappointment at having heard nothing as to orders, hoping that they might still count upon receiving a considerable proportion, since they had regulated their other business in that expectation, and adding that they could not suppose price to stand in the way, for they understood speed of delivery was the principal consideration ; but they asked that, if absolutely necessary in order to obtain a fair share, they might have an opportunity "to reconsider prices such as had been given on former occasions to rival firms." This complaint, and the delicate hint about the peculiar piece of favouritism shown to Kynochs, led to a conference between the Financial Secretaries of the War Office and the Admiralty ; and in the result the final allocation was left, though contrary to the ordinary practice, in the hands of the Director of Army Contracts, who apportioned the orders between the National Explosives Company, Nobel's Company, the Cotton Powder Company, and Kynochs. Kynochs got 300,000 lb., and they were allowed to charge 2*s.* 6*d.* per lb., though the other firms were supplying at 2*s.*, 2*s.* 1*d.*, and 2*s.* 3*d.*

Let us now consider the defence made by the officials concerned when the War Office Contracts Committee examined them upon the scandals.

Questioned respecting the strange offer to Kynochs to reduce their tender, the Director of Naval Ordnance expressed surprise at exception being taken to the act, "seeing it has been done on other occasions without comment. In 1898," he added, "the National Explosives Company quoted certain cordite at 1*s.* 10½*d.* ; Kynochs quoted at 2*s.* 4½*d.* The Director of Contracts asked Kynoch—sent him a tender form, as I understand—to tender at 1*s.* 10½*d.* (that was without any reference to the Admiralty), and he did so." Admiral Jeffreys may have thought that precedent excused an unjustifiable act, but I think my readers will agree that the value of his quotation is the indication it affords of the extent of the evil. With regard to this piece of favouritism in 1898, it was pleaded in defence that no other firm asked for reductions. This is a childish plea, for no other firm was given the opportunity. Moreover, Kynochs were only asked to reduce their price to their competitors' level, not below it.

A plea upon which the officials placed much reliance was the necessity for keeping Kynochs employed. There was no necessity at all for keeping them employed if other firms made more satisfactory tenders ; and when Mr. Powell Williams was asked if there was not the same urgency to keep other firms employed also, he was obliged to answer "Yes."

But attempts were also made to defend the allocation to Kynochs upon the ground of their superiority. They "are a thoroughly reliable and efficient firm," said the Director of Naval Ordnance. Colonel Hadden's report, which I have already quoted, does not bear out this testimonial in any extraordinary degree ; and when Admiral Jeffreys went on to draw comparisons with other firms to the advantage of Kynochs, he floundered rather badly. For his refusal to allocate to two cheaper competitors, the

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New Explosives and the Chilworth Companies, he pleaded that the Admiralty had had no experience of them. That is no sort of reason. On the contrary, seeing how advantageous their tenders looked, it was the very reason for following the Director of War Contracts' recommendation to give them a trial. Regarding the refusal to employ Nobel's, the Admiralty officials contended that they had employed them once, and found them unsatisfactory, owing to the high percentage of rejections; but this was on a size 50 order, which is very difficult to make, and a high percentage of rejections was not the monopoly of Nobel's, who, besides, had not the experience given by the Admiralty to Kynochs. Admiral Jeffreys further stated that Nobel's chief experience was with the wet process, with which the Admiralty did not agree. But this assertion was flatly contrary to the fact (made, of course, under misapprehension, but still culpable); for the Company's manager testified before the Committee that his firm had never manufactured cordite except by the dry process. Nor can it be contended that the capacity of Kynochs' works (which it was deemed so necessary to keep fully employed) was greater than Nobel's. Kynochs' chairman, Mr. Arthur Chamberlain, told the Committee that his firm's maximum output was 30 tons a week, say 1,560 tons a year. But it was placed in evidence by Nobel's manager that his company could produce from 2,000 to 2,500 tons of cordite a year, besides 3,000 to 3,500 tons of dry paste by itself. It was, I suppose, this comparatively limited capacity of Kynochs which has caused them to be so overdue with their orders; for it was stated in the evidence given before the Contracts Committee in July, 1900, that of the contracts made in 1898, Kynochs was the only firm which had cordite still due to be delivered. Upon orders given in 1899, the Cotton Powder Company had 10,000 lb. due, the National Explosives Company 30,410 lb., Kynochs 241,000 lb. All the other firms together had only 50,000 lb. undelivered.

Another defence of Kynochs' alleged superiority broke down under inquiry. Admiral Jeffreys testified his belief that they "are the only firm who make cordite who also make the whole of their ingredients, except sulphuric acid; they make their own nitro-glycerine and everything else, whereas every other firm in England, I believe, has to depend on sub-contractors." This, of course, is an important point. It is eminently undesirable that England should depend upon foreign countries for the ingredients of her ammunition. But the attribution to Kynochs of the special fulfilment of this desire was unfortunate. With reference to Admiral Jeffreys' "nitro-glycerine and everything else," it may be said that the main ingredients are nitro-glycerine and gun-cotton. Mr. Chamberlain, Kynochs' chairman, admitted in evidence that his firm imported large quantities of gun-cotton, and when pressed as to whether the gun-cotton was to be used in the manufacture of cordite to be supplied to the Government, replied: "I really could not tell you; it just depends on our own convenience." But, according to the Government's specifications, the use of imported materials is not a question of the convenience of the manufacturers; the schedule attached to every order for cordite contains the condition that the supply must be wholly manufactured in Great Britain or Ireland. The manager of Nobel's, on the contrary, testified that his company, which had made special extensions in 1893 in order to be able at any time to furnish the necessary amount of gun-cotton to keep the cordite plant supplied to its full capacity, and had been one of the largest manufacturers of gun-cotton for some years, adhered to the specification.

Without pursuing much further into what may be wearisome detail this illustration of bureaucratic mismanagement, two other points may just be referred to. The Admiralty officials contended in defence of their knocking out of cheap competitive tenders that they knew the Land Service was going to place large orders, and so they wished to confine their orders to the two firms to which they were accustomed. The allocation, it will be remembered, was made in the early months of 1900, and in May, 1900, two Land Service orders for cordite were given out; the total amount was only 1,892,500 lb. (of which, by the way, Kynochs received 900,000 lb.). But what I have already adduced as to the completion of orders already existing by the different firms demonstrates that this plea, though put forward as the main reason for the Admiralty's action, will not hold water. The statement, alleged with apparent seriousness, that the distribution among all the firms of the Naval order "would both be harassing and forcing the unfortunate contractors to deliver to their respective departments," is, in the circumstances, a curious reason for knocking out the firms which were

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up-to-date with their deliveries, in order that the overdue Kynochs might be the more favoured.

The other point is: Why, if the Admiralty did not intend to give the other firms a chance, did they make fools of those other firms by asking them to tender at all, thus exciting hopes which they intended to disappoint, and putting them to trouble which was not destined to be rewarded? This point is worth dwelling upon, because it does not appear to be an isolated instance of Government methods in the matter of contracts We had another instance of it in the case of the transport contracts of the Remount Department. It would be interesting to know how far this system of apparently putting up work to open competition, while in reality doing nothing of the kind, is followed in the Government service generally.

It is needful that public opinion should be roused on these points, for there seems to be a marked disinclination to bring home Governmental misdeeds to the parties concerned. Most of the details, for example, of these Cordite Contracts which I have given above were proposed to be inserted in the Report of the War Office Contracts Committee. Yet, though the evidence shows them to be incontestable, the Committee, by six votes to two, declined to insert them, but wrote instead a much shorter and modified report of the circumstances. In their "Conclusions" this Committee reported: "Your Committee are satisfied that the orders were allocated with the single object of securing the best results to the public service. Your Committee, however, consider that in any case in which it might be thought desirable to allow a tender to be modified, a like opportunity should be afforded to all the firms tendering." The recurrence of the word "tender" suggests another sense in which it is used. I think my readers will agree that, instead of these Cordite scandals calling for a whitewashing process, they demand to be considered as a grave indication of the general want of businesslike capacity in the public service, and of the consequent waste of public money.

Official Slackness.

Just for a moment let me revert to the South African War Contracts. At the beginning of these articles, reference was made to the official plea that only trustworthy firms should be employed on Government contracts, because otherwise there might be poor quality in the supplies. This plea has been advanced in favour of endeavouring to limit the number of contractors, and of treating cheapness in tenders as a minor consideration. When mentioning the plea, I have written down the obvious reply, that it is within the power, and should be the business, of officials to see that the materials supplied to them by contractors are of the quality mentioned or implied in the contract. Yet it is clear that this primary function—the official inspection of supplies—is not carried out as universally as it should be. The South African war brought out two instances at least of such lack of inspection. There was the case of the hay supplied to the steamship *Manchester Port*. Much of this hay was not inspected at all, and amongst the uninspected consignments was hay of so unsatisfactory a character as to be absolutely unfit for the purpose for which it was wanted, and even dangerous to the vessel carrying it, owing to the risk of heating. Yet this hay was loaded upon the vessel and started upon its journey from Liverpool. But one or two gentlemen—a naval officer and Mr. Houston, M.P., the chairman of the Company chartering the ship—gave information to the War Office, and owing to this information, supplied from outside, inspection was tardily made when the vessel arrived at Tilbury Docks. It was only thus, adventitiously, that the bad hay came to be condemned.

Another case of similar slackness was that of the boots supplied to the Volunteer Service Company of the Worcestershire Regiment. The quotation for the boots first given was 10*s.* 6*d.* per pair, but it was subsequently raised to 12*s.* 6*d.* in order to ensure obtaining the best quality. It subsequently transpired that the contractors bought these boots at 7*s.* per pair. But the main point is that when these pseudo-best-quality boots were tried on a route march, in wet weather, they proved to be of very inferior quality indeed, and out of 226 pairs about 150 pairs were condemned. Here, again, a proper system of inspection should have avoided the trouble. True, these particular boots were not ordered direct by the War Office, the contract being made by the Volunteer officials themselves. But, as the War Office Contracts Committee pointed out in their report on the subject, if the War Office made arrangements to supply from Government stores boots and similar equipment, efficient inspection and serviceable equipment might be ensured. They might be; but when we

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remember the stories of the brown-paper soles in Egypt, it is by means certain.

The point of these two instances is that the Government, in some of its Departments, does not take ordinary businesslike pains to see that its contractors supply the article contracted for, and thus invites contractors to fall short of the stipulated requirements. No business firm could afford to tolerate such slackness with regard to its own supplies; why should the country have to put up with it, to the sacrifice alike of the taxpayers' pockets and the efficiency of the services?

Are we not getting very near cumulative and ample proof of "the utter want of buinessike administrative capacity on the part of the Government" with which Lord Morley thought it unfair to charge the Government?

THE GRASS.

I ROUSE ere on the tree
The south wind bloweth power;
I come ere roves the bee,
I go not with the flower.

I climb the April hill,
I labour with the light;
I toil with hope and will,
I toil by day and night.

I crown the desert place,
I edge the meadow stream,
I look into Love's face,
And it doth feed her dream

My lot with man is cast,
I round him shine and wave,
Nor fail him at the last:
I lie upon his grave.

JOHN VANCE CHENEY.

NOTE.—*The Editor regrets that by an oversight the acknowledgment of the permission to reproduce Mr. Solomon J. Solomon's picture, "The Blind Beggar," in the Christmas Number of the* WINDSOR MAGAZINE, *was inaccurately expressed. It should have ascribed the copyright of the picture solely to Mr. H. W. R. Child, who is issuing a large plate reproduction of the painting. It was by Mr. Child's kind permission that this picture was included in the article on Mr. Solomon's work.*

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STRONG MAC.

By S. R. CROCKETT.*

SYNOPSIS OF FOREGOING CHAPTERS.—The story opened in the schoolhouse of Lowran, where a great noise was proceeding from the young men's bench. The Ploughing Match Day had been a holiday since the beginning of time. But Donald Gracie, the schoolmaster, had on this occasion denied the request of his scholars. The riot provoked the Dominie into striking the biggest youth in the school, Muckle Sandy, who retorted by knocking the schoolmaster down and standing over him with ash-plant raised to strike. But before Muckle Sandy Ewan had time to lift his weapon, the ash-plant was wrenched out of his hand by Dora Gracie, the schoolmaster's daughter, who then, with the aid of "Strong Mac," one of the bigger boys, proceeded to teach the school, after sending the Dominie to bed. The Dominie himself comes of distinguished stock, but has fallen on evil days through his fatal craving for drink. His daughter is now his one good influence. Strong Mac wins the "Single-handed" cup in the ploughing match, but in the hour of his success over Muckle Sandy remembers his promise to help Adora Gracie "keep school." He returns hastily to the schoolhouse and submits to self-suggested strokes on the hand from Jock Fairies, in penance for his defaulting. The second instalment ended with the sudden alarm of Charlotte Webster, in love with Strong Mac, lest in her pique at his preference for Adora Gracie she has betrayed him as a poacher into the hands of the Laird's gamekeepers.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CLEUCH OF PLUCKAMIN.

NOW this was what had happened. Roy McCulloch, Daid's master and lord, strode carelessly on before, his bag with the rejected pheasant and the wet ammunition-flask no more than a feather on his broad shoulders. He cried "Good e'en!" to one or two men in the act of plunging head first into low doorways — stragglers mostly from the ploughing match in search of "something comfortable."

"Hae ye gotten the Single-handed in your pooch?" cried one, as Roy passed the hedge change-house tenanted by Lucky Greentrees. "Come in here, man, an' we'll fill it for ye wi' something stronger than moss-water!"

But Roy had forgotten all about the cup and the ploughing match, and strode on his way with no more than an acknowledging wave of the hand.

Behind him, unseen in the dusk, dodged and ducked, from wood-shed to pig-sty, from midden-stead to cart-shed, one Daid the Deil, servant and slave.

Daid the Hero-Worshipper never raised his eyes from the ground as he made these swallow-like dashes. He was elaborately amusing himself, that was all, if anyone chanced to notice him. He gave Joe Maxwell's pig what he called a "pork" in the ribs with a stick, just to hear it squeal, and was half way down to Harvy Mason's stables before the pig's owner could hirple to the door and shake a futile fist after him. Arrived at the stable, he went to the exact spar to which (inside) he knew "Tear-'em," Harvy Mason's big white mongrel, would be chained. Harvy was the Cairn Edward carrier, and Tear-'em walked beneath the cart and lived upon the calves of the public. Daid rattled on the outside spars and *boo-ed* through at Tear-'em till he raged himself into a blind fury, which could only be expressed by suffocating and blood-curdling grunts deep in his throat. This pleased Daid. He imitated a cat-fight and *hist-ed* Tear-'em upon the combatants.

At this moment Strong Mac turned round, for anything connected with the feelings of an animal touched him. He recognised the "baited" tones of Tear-'em, and looked back to discover the cause.

Daid the Deil was balancing a hay-rake on his nose with elaborate precautions. Apparently he had been doing nothing else for the past hour. Innocence exuded obviously from his every part. Love for all innocent and manly sports was in the lines of his back. But Strong Mac was not deceived. He knew Daid and — he had heard the dog's statement of the case.

"You, Deil," he cried, "let the dog alane, or I'll fair skin ye alive the morn!" And so went his way, sure that he would be obeyed.

"There, noo," said Daid to himself admiringly, "he kenned juist as weel as if he had seen me. And he'll mind to lick me for it, too, the morn. He never forgets onything — na, no him!"

Thus are reputations made and the willing worshipper built up in his faith. At the foot of the village Strong Mac struck up the braeface, vaulting over a dry-stone dyke and making straight for the corner of the Cleuch

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of Pluckamin. This was (and is) a narrow gorge through which roars the drainage of the Loch of Pluckamin, a large and sombre sheet of water out on the flat of the moorland. The Cleuch was filled from end to end with great pines that stretched their green-spreading crowns into the upper air. They hid their root in crevices of the rock, gripping and clutching desperately till they had made good their footing above still pool and roaring waterfall. At the bottom there was a perilous scramble of a footpath along the edge of the burn, while all the sides of the gully were covered with a tangle of alder and hazel, birch and bramble. The Cleuch of Pluckamin was no lady's bowling-green. The wild goat and the hill fox found shelter there, and under its water-worn hoops of rock, smooth and glistening, were pools and weirs untouched by any sun from January to December.

Without a touch of fear or thought of danger, Strong Mac dipped into the covert. He did it naturally, as a frog drops back into a pond. Roy usually varied his route homeward as the whim took him, but on this occasion he had to secure his gun, which, as we know, lay hidden at the upper end of the Cleuch, just where it opens out upon the bare brown face of the heather, and where the scramble of bushes stops suddenly as if cut by the scythe.

In silence Roy moved along the bottom of the glen. He was a hunter by nature and a lifetime's practice, so he could advance without disturbing the droopy birds chittering out their discontent with the damp November drizzle on the crotches of the pines. Blackbirds and thrushes they were mostly, all yammering and cat-calling like school-children when the master's back is turned. On the opposite bank an outcast starling—a rare bird in Galloway in those times—scolded venomously, while a storm-cock mocked him brutally from a tree-top, shouting and sneering after his kind as became the bully of the woods.

Strong Mac, walking on feet that made no noise, and easing the branches back like a wild animal, they minded not at all. Yet they were angry about something. Some enemy or intruder had put them into that frame of mind. Roy McCulloch stopped and listened. He saw nothing; he heard nothing; but, borne on the light breeze which blew down the Cleuch, like the down-draught of a chimney, there came—the smell of burning tobacco!

That, through all the wild places, means but one thing—a game-watcher! Instantly Mac became acutely conscious of the dead pheasant in his bag. True, he had not shot it on the lands of the Laird of Lowran, but upon those of Bennanbrack, farther up the waterside. But who was there to prove that? Instead of returning to school and Adora, he, Roy McCulloch, would go to gaol for a mere bird. Had it been a couple of deer, now, that would have been different; but a silly lump of poultry!

He stood considering. The smell of tobacco came more clearly. He could distinctly hear footsteps beneath him down the Cleuch. If he took the side of the glen, he would be trapped at the top, without a doubt. They would have watchers posted there.

Then upon the moorland lad there fell the intense hatred of the hillman for the wooded glens, which to him are so many traps.

"They wad never hae gotten me on the side o' Bennanbrack, nor yet amang the clints o' the Grennoch!"

Sticks were breaking under clumsy treading down in the deeps of the Cleuch. There came a whistling rush of blackbirds, angry at being disturbed, the storm-cock among them in a right royal fluster, but still leading the bad language.

Suddenly something dropped from a tree right in front—a monkey to the eye, thus a-swing among the branches—a boy presently, even David McRobb, still semi-arboreal in his habits.

"Wheesht!" he whispered, taking Strong Mac by the arm, all one tremble of fear and importance. "They're doon yonder, three o' them, followin' ye! And Jonathan Grier is waiting wi' some mair at the Cleuch head. Gie me the bag, quick!"

Roy hesitated. He could not bring this boy into his stupidities, nor let him bear the consequences of his misdemeanours against the law.

"Haste ye, Strong Mac!" hissed Daid in his ear; "I ken this wood—ye dinna. Gie me the bag."

The instant the strap was slipped, Daid gave it a double turn about his thin shoulders, and began to draw himself up into the tree from which he had descended. Where he went after that, no man knoweth. He had often before crossed the Cleuch from side to side on the tree tops, without any more motive than to find out whether he could do it or not. And to-night he had the strongest of all earthly (or other) motives for making the attempt—that he might please Strong Mac.

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Relieved of his burden, Roy McCulloch went his way up the glen, whistling easily, the noise behind him growing louder.

A hundred yards from the "muir-face," as Roy called it, there was a narrow cut where a fallen boulder had parted in two. The path went between the fragments.

"That's whaur they'll grip me," thought Strong Mac. "I'll hae to tak' care an' keep my temper. I dinna want to be pitten in the gaol for mishandlin' a game-watcher in the dischairge o' his duty!"

As he predicted, even so the event fell out.

Roy had passed, whistling easily "The Wind that Shakes the Barley," when between the stones three or four men fell upon him, some catching him about the neck, some hauling the legs from underneath him, while yet others came crashing through the trees to the assistance of his captors, shouting: "Hae ye gotten him?"

"Gotten him? Aye," growled Jonathan Grier, the head keeper, "an' deil's hait else. That lassie, Chairlie Webster, maun hae been leein' to us, the besom! Wait till I get my tongue on her!"

By this time Roy had been allowed to sit up, his captors standing about him in various attitudes of disappointment.

"What are ye doin' here in the glen?" demanded the keeper, with an oath.

"On my way hame frae the schule," Roy answered pleasantly. "It's mair sheltered on a nicht like this."

"Nane o' your lip!" retorted the keeper. "Turn oot your pooches, and if ye hae as muckle as a hare grin or a bit o' brass wire on ye, by my faith, ye shall sleep i' the lock-up this nicht! Ye are here after the pheasants; we hae had information."

"Ow, aye!" said Roy calmly. "It's easy to kill pheasants wi' a Laitin Grammar an' this!"

He held out the inscribed cup, which he had put in the large inner pocket of his coat, to keep it dry.

"What's that?" demanded another voice suddenly—that of the young man with the brown face and short tawny beard who had been the keeper's companion, but who had taken no part in the struggle.

"A silver cup, sir! He's been stealin' it frae the big hoose, I'll warrant!" cried the keeper.

"Let me see it," said the bearded man in a tone of authority.

The cup was handed to him. He scrutinised it in the fading twilight, holding the silver vase to the level of his eyes.

"Why, it's the cup I gave to be competed for at the ploughing match!" he said. "Where did you get this, sirrah?"

"I won it at the ploughin' match," said Roy easily.

"It's the Single-handed! *You* win the Single-handed! That's a guid yin!" cried Keeper Jonathan.

"Aye, but it's true; I saw him do it!" interrupted one of the men. "I didna ken it was this lad ye war after, Jonathan Grier, or I wad never hae steered step to catch him—no, though he had ta'en twenty back-loads of pheasants aff your grund—nesty belly-fillin' beasts (savin' your presence, laird!) that do naething but fatten themsels at the expense o' us puir tenants!"

"Heartily said, Mains!" replied the young man with the beard good-humouredly. "I am glad to hear that the cup stays in Lowran, especially since Kirkanders won the match. But, all the same, I'm glad also that the lad is carryin' home a silver trophy honestly come by, rather than even one back-load of my pheasants."

"Is there nocht we can haud him for, sir," groaned the keeper, "after a' this gather up? It will be a' ower the pairish by this time the morn that he has dune us! Oh, that misleart lassie! I thocht she had a pick at him and that we were sure to catch him. She lookit that mad when she was speakin' aboot him!"

"That ye never can tell wi' the weemen," said the farmer of Mains, filling his pipe philosophically.

* * * * *

It was curious that as they went back down the Cleuch, searching for a safe point at which to emerge upon the open country, several of Roy's captors were struck by large branches, fir-cones, and stones, which rattled down from the tree-tops or detached themselves from the precipitous ledges of the Cleuch. At last Keeper Jonathan Grier, who had been cocking his eye aloft ever since a fir-cone—"the size of a pitatae beetle," as he expressed it—had taken him convincingly on the bridge of the nose, lifted his gun and fired.

Some affirmed that they heard a faint scream; but nothing fell to the ground, and the party stood wonderingly silent. The top of the pine-tree was black and dense against the sky.

"What did ye fire at, Jonathan—a bogle or a wild cat?"

"Something that had nae richt to be

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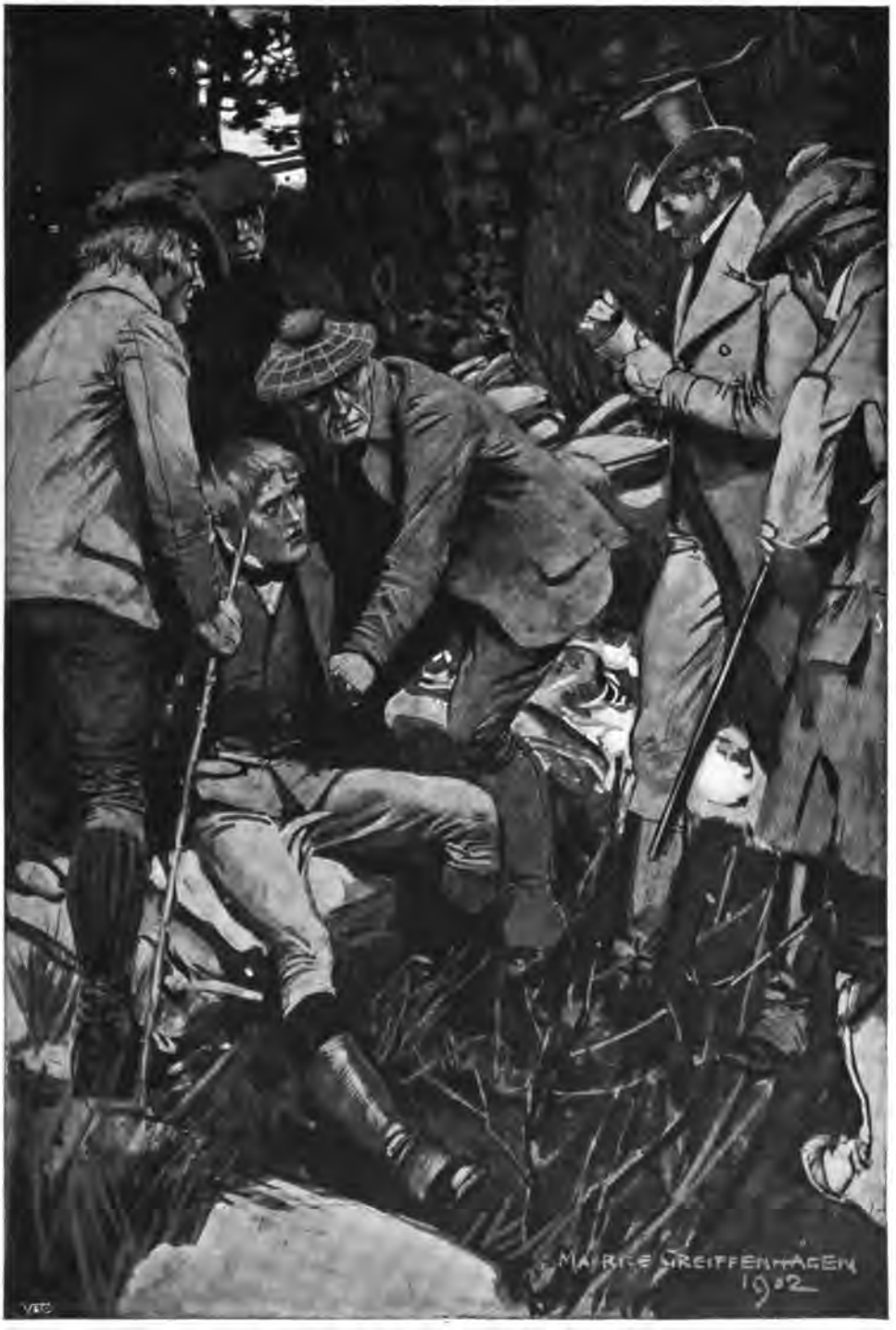

"'Why, it's the cup I gave to be competed for at the ploughing match!'"

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up there, I wot," said Jonathan —"wild cat or no wild cat."

"Come your ways!" said the new Laird of Lowran; "ye just saw nothing at all! But there will be a drop of something warm for ye in the servants'-hall—I'll step round and order it to be sent in! Good-night!"

"Guid-e'en to ye, sir, an' your verra guid health!"

CHAPTER X.

"OH, THAT IT WERE YESTERDAY!"

THUS it was that, for the time being, Strong Mac escaped from the fowler's snare. He extricated himself out of the wood at the Cleuch head, and then lay long with his breast on the heather, and his ears, as he said, "laid back on his neck with listening," before he ventured to turn back for his gun. Having secured that, he crept quietly to the edge of the Cleuch, peering down into its dark depths, and giving again and again the whistle by which he knew Daid would recognise him if he had not already gone home. An owl hooted, but presently the bird itself passed close to him with a soft *woof* of feathers and a glint of a face like a white mask. Other answer there was none.

Then over the broad surface of the moorland Strong Mac set out for home with the long, equable lope of the wolf, easy, elastic, untiring. So perfect was now his local knowledge that sometimes in the utter darkness he would swerve a few yards to the right or the left, so as to take the leap over a moss-hag at an easier place. Yet all he had to guide him in such a case was the feel of the ground beneath his feet!

As he neared the march dyke of the tiny freehold House of Muir, Roy saw the bright light streaming from the kitchen door out over the scrap of "park." A lantern was flitting this way and that among the outhouses. Roy McCulloch whistled three times. The lantern stopped suddenly, as if the bearer listened intently—then it was waved three times in reply. All was well. That was Jamie's signal. His father would doubtless be indoors preparing the supper.

"Where in the creation hae ye been?" cried Jamie in a burst. "I heard a shot let aff an' ran up the Cleuch, but I cam' on the keepers rowtin' through the bushes like sae mony elephants an' was obligated to keep the upper side, so as to hae the muir ahint me in case o' need."

After a brief explanation Roy helped his brother to finish the foddering of the cattle and of the two shaggy ponies which represented all the bestial of the House of Muir. Folk asserted privately that these last were used for bringing in the "winter provend," meaning thereby roe-deer killed on other people's property. But Sharon McCulloch (who certainly ought to have known) stated that "the shelties were the means, under Providence and a guid hazel rung, o' bringing in the fuel frae the flowe—the peats that the lairds hereabouts wad deny to a puir man that didna ken his richts. Whilk man is no Sharon McCulloch o' the House o' Muir!"

Then the two young men went within doors. A bright fire was burning in a wide fireplace. Pots and kettles were round the walls in burnished rows. A pan was frizzling cheerfully from a swing-bar. There was an odour of "champit" potatoes in the land, which revealed to Roy for the first time that he was hungry. He had not had time to think of the matter before.

A strong-faced man with a bony frame, his great head covered with a wildly tossed mane of grey hair, wheeled sharply from the fire over which he had been bending. A wooden skewer was in his hand, wherewith he had been turning half-a-dozen large loch trout, which chattered and buzzed in the pan as if, after long silence, they had suddenly become voluble with a lifetime of cheerful sound. The man was not old—to judge, that is, by the quick alertness of his movements, by the effortless way in which with one hand he hung the pan a few links higher, or reached up to the rafters to hand down a white pudding, and especially by the penetrating eye of light blue which he turned upon his son as he entered.

Yet the lines under the lower lids, the strong bony throat and sinewy wrist revealed the man who has passed the three-score and verges towards the additional ten. Nevertheless there were not ten men in the county who would have ventured to come to grips with Sharon McCulloch, called "the Auld Man o' the Muir."

He held his little handbreadth of land on peculiar terms. During the time of the Leveller troubles, about the year 1723, his grandfather, one Jeremiah McCulloch, had rendered a great service to the Laird of Bennanbrack—no less than the saving of his life and that of his son. Jeremiah McCulloch was then a young man, and stood high in repute with all the neighbouring gentry as a clever lad, a kennin'

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unscrupulous, maybe, but all the better of that in these troublous times—so long, that is, as he showed himself unscrupulous only on the right side.

Accordingly, when he married and settled, the grateful Laird of Bennanbrack, without consulting his man of business, devised to Jeremiah McCulloch, "in recognition of kindnesses received and as a reward of faithful service, the lands of House of Muir, extending from the march of the Laird of Buttonbothan to where my land touches the ground of the Laird of Lowran at the corner of the march-dyke, thence in a straight line across to the Pluckamin Water, with all the——" and so forth — "the whole amounting to rather more than three hundred acres, of which ten are arable, on condition that on the 31st of December of each year he shall deliver one cartload of peats at the mansion-house of Bennanbrack, such as may be fitly usit for the Yule fire in the hall."

Now, the grant of this oasis on the face of the muir to a perpetual tenant sufficiently irritated the surrounding lairds—the Laird of Lowran and him of Buttonbothan. And it is shrewdly suspected that Chesney Barwinnock, Esquire of Bennanbrack, being at unending loggerheads with his fellows, had been motived to dispone his lands of House of Muir for this laudable and neighbourly purpose. But in the back-letter attached to the deed he gave another reason besides gratitude towards the preserver of his life and lineage. He averred that "the bit grund did not lie weel to the rest of his property."

However, it was not long after that Chesney Barwinnock, Esquire, D.L., gave up the ghost, and that before he had been able to carry out his declared intention of building a new house for Jeremiah McCulloch, suitable to the residence of a man who was now a landed proprietor and a legal heritor in the parish of Lowran.

So it came about that to the original little two-roomed cottage—"but-and-ben"—occupied by the shepherd, Jeremiah and his successor had added with their own hands, and building with the rough undressed stones from the muir, bound together with lime, brought up in creels on pony-back, the strangest ramble of chambers, opening one out of the other, all, however, being one storey in height. The farm buildings were set, roughly speaking, in the form of a square, but the dwelling-house itself crawled over the brown bent like a game of dominoes.

So long, however, as Jeremiah, the first founder and hero, lived, there was no open rupture. But in due time to him there was born a son, who, taking the road to Belfast, carried on a traffic in Irish cattle by way of Loch Ryan. A strong, rash, fightful man was this Ebenezer McCulloch, biblically militant, that is, and weightily dialectic, with the most convincing reasons for the faith that was in him.

Sharon, now the master of House of Muir, was the son of this Ebenezer. In his youth he had been loaned every summer half of the year to his grandfather to help him with his handful of hill acres, and the sheep and nowt that grazed upon them. While there, he had picked up what learning he could out of books, on the hillside watching the yowes, or snugged in the bieldy corner of some "bucht" with the light of early summer breaking clear overhead.

Then in the winter young Sharon McCulloch had sailed on every sea; trading, smuggling, lifting cargoes of rum at the Isle of Man, French brandy off Bayonne, tobacco in the great salt loch which runs inland to Vigo, or riding in the milky smother outside Bilbao. Harsh Catalan, red-capped and ready with knife-blade; swart, voluble Valencian, with rings in his ears, half Moorish Murcian — this Ishmaelite of a Sharon had met and communed with all in their own tongue before he was fifteen years old.

But now for many years—even before his father's death—he had given up his roving sea life. As elsewhere, the smuggling trade had led to no great fortune. Danger and excitement made up its chief rewards. So Ebenezer, the free trader, being gathered to his fathers, and the adventure beginning to pall, Sharon McCulloch looked one day through the deserted rooms of House of Muir, which his father had added and plenished, shook his head, and set off next day to Kelton Hill fair. There he looked round for the sonsiest lass he could see—not the bonniest, mark you, but the healthiest and heartsomest. He picked out a certain Mary Pringle, daughter of a cottier in Buittle. Her he followed through the fair with quiet observance for the space of an hour, and having assured himself that her walk and conversation were sedate, and that she was physically fit (she knocked down with one free, open-handed cuff a neighbour lad who attempted to salute her in public), Sharon announced to himself that this was the girl for him.

And so it turned out. He presented the case to the lady in as many words, where-

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upon Mary and he went in search of her father and mother, who were "howffed" at the house of a gossip over a "dish o' tea wi' a cinder in't!"

"I hae fand a place, mither," said Mary Pringle.

"Ye hae," said her mother; "and is this your maister?"

"Na; he's my guidman!" answered Mary.

"*And* your maister, too!" corrected Sharon promptly. He felt that it was better to have a clear understanding from the beginning.

Nevertheless, Sharon McCulloch used Mary Pringle well, keeping her, as she affirmed, "baith couthy and caigy" in these upland solitudes where his home was. In the days while she had a pair of sturdy urchins to look after, Mary McCulloch had had no great call to go far from home. Her husband had made enough to keep them well. There was enough of work to do with the bit of corn in the hollow, the two or three cows in the parks, and the sheep on the hill. The man's wild tendencies seemed to have died out.

Every market Monday he would saunter down to the town and bring home his purchases on pony-back, walking himself with long loping strides by its side. They called him the Whaup Laird in those days, and Mary McCulloch watched for him from the door that she might spy when he came down the far brae face. Then she put the kettle on to boil. When he was at the march dyke, you might have heard the ham skirling in the pan, and by the time the stable door was shut on the shaggy pony, all was set duly in array upon the table.

But there fell a strange judgment upon Sharon and his house which changed all his life. The little property of House of Muir was, roughly, the shape of an isosceles triangle with its apex pointing up the hill. There also was the point where the three lairds' ground met, and on a heathery hillock high over the crofts and the homestead, Mary McCulloch loved to sit and knit, the children playing about, while she watched for her husband's return from the hills and lochs, from a visit to his feudal chief at Bennanbrack, or yet further afield, from the market town of Drumfern.

One day there had been a great hither-and-thithering on the hills. The Lord-Lieutenant of the county, on a visit to my Lord Glenkells, was being shown the best sport the countryside afforded. Deer were driven, and hunted, and shot at with noise and tumult, while in the high corner of their father's little property two children clapped their hands to see the fine ruddy-brown beasts go flying over the dykes like birds, and to hear the blithe *crack-cracking* of the guns.

Sharon McCulloch was late in coming home that day. He had been detained by the need to call at a smithy and have a shoe put on the pony.

So when he came to the House of Muir, lo! the door was open and the house vacant. At which he laughed to himself.

"Puir thing!" he said, well pleased, "it will hae been a treat to her. She doesna often see sic a stir o' folk in this wild place!"

And so he took his way up to the look-out knowe whereon, to pleasure her, he had built a cairn with a rude bench of stone all about it.

Yes, she was there. He could see her white mutch tied with a ribbon and the black lace shawl he had brought her all the way from Malaga, where the oranges grow.

And yonder, toddling towards him, came the children, hand in hand. They were both weeping bitterly, but it was Roy who spoke.

"Minnie's sleeping!" he said; "she winna wauken and speak to us!"

His face suddenly ice, Sharon made one wild rush up the slope. Mary had been shot as she sat—dead—without having moved. She was leaning against the cairn and looking down as if at her knitting. The wool was still on the wires. Not a stitch was dropped. A break in the dyke revealed where a stag had passed in front of where she sat.

For the rest, all were gone from the hill, hunters and hunted, pursuers and pursued. The glen was empty, beaters, game-watchers, carrying-ponies, all the rout. *It might have been yesterday*, thought Sharon McCulloch, as he looked on the stillness.

He awoke to find himself alone upon the heather with a dead woman and two little children that cried.

* * * * *

From that day forth the man was changed. He went no more regularly to market. Only when he had sheep to sell he might be seen upon the drove road very early in the morning, though already in the low country and clear of the hills. And no man knew the paths by which he had driven his beasts so far unseen.

For the rest, he declared war against those landlords who had taken part in the careless cruel sport by which he had lost his wife.

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He bought and sold little, for his larder was never empty of fresh venison. Some he would entice upon his ground and shoot. Others he would bring long distances after a night of stalking. He was watched, pursued, lain in wait for—all in vain. He could bring a dead buck into the House of Muir through a cordon of gamekeepers, and then as the morning broke they would see him busy skinning it in the cart-shed.

As the lads grew up, he trained them carefully, finding in Roy an ally after his heart. All the smuggler's inherited art, all the strength and vigour of the master mariner who had kept the wildest crew of mixed Latin races in check without bloodshed, seemed to have descended to this boy. James was more like his mother, and though he could be trusted to watch, to follow, and to report, he was, as his father said, "no great things at the fechtin'!"

Such was the strange household of House of Muir to which Strong Mac returned, bringing the Single-handed trophy with him.

CHAPTER XI.

WITHOUT ARE DOGS.

SHARON MCCULLOCH and his two sons sat about the table eating their supper. The former listened grimly to the tale his sons told him, but he showed no enthusiasm, not even when the cup was placed before him. He only took it in his hands and looked at it curiously.

"Where learned ye to plough?" he said, turning the Single-handed about in his long, supple fingers.

"Last back-end—doon yont there!" said Roy, with his mouth full of alternate bacon and fried potato-scone. He indicated the farm at the foot of the hill, where he had passed the previous winter, with a jerk of his thumb.

"Ye maun hae a straight e'e in your head," he said, adding grimly: "I wush ye wad put some mair o't into your shootin'! Ye missed that last roe at thirty yards; and if I hadna been ahint ye, the beast wad hae gotten awa'!"

"It's that auld besom," said Roy uneasily, looking at his gun; "she winna throw where ye haud her—na, no within three feet at thirty yards. Ye should try her yoursel', faither."

"Ill workmen, ill tools!" said his father sententiously. "Roy, Roy, to make excuse is no what I expected o' the son o' Sharon McCulloch!"

The words stung the boy.

"See here," he said, "you gie me the lend o' your rifle and you tak' auld Bess there, and I'll gie ye three bull's-eyes oot o' six at a mark the morn's mornin'!"

Sharon McCulloch chuckled.

"Marks!" he cried, "marks! Nane o' your barn-ends for me! The marks I like best are the bonny broon marks that come loupin' ower oor mairch dyke wi' horns on their heads. Get doon the muckle Bible, James, and let us worship God."

So these three, like David and his outlaw folk in their cave at Engedi, set themselves, in a lull of the campaign against the great ones of the earth, to sing the warrior psalms and read the chronicles of warlike deeds out of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. This night it was the story of how Jonathan climbed the rock over against Michmash, how he put the Philistines to rout, and the story held them all fast. When Sharon McCulloch had finished, he made but one comment.

"Twenty men in half an acre o' grund—that was a Single-handed worth bringin' hame!" he said. "Let us pray." Then the stern-faced gaunt old man prayed to the God of Battles, strong in the faith that he and his two sons stood on their proper defences with the blessing of Joshua's God, and Samson's God, and the God of all the warring judges and kings.

And this was the substance of his prayer—

"Hold Thou us in the hollow of Thy hand, O Lord. Keep us safe in this straight place, even as Thou didst Thy servant Jonah in the belly of the whale. Give us good outgate, as Thou didst him, when the waters compass about our souls, when the deeps close round, when the weeds are wrapt about our heads.

"We are compassed by the hosts of ungodly that take Thy name in vain and do wickedly all day long. Blood is on their hands, evil in their hearts. Like Abraham, may we smite the four kings that are confederate against us, Cherdorlaomer, and Tidal, and Amraphel, and Arioch—whilk is to say my Lord Glenkells, that tarrieth long at the wine-cup; and Barwhinnock o' Bennanbrack, that hath done us much evil and intendeth more; and Bodden o' Buttonbothan, that eggeth him on; and eke this new Laird o' Lowran, Sidney Latimer, that hath this night raised up his heel against us. Tumble them all into the slime pits of Siddim, good

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Lord. Gie them paiks in the vale of Mamre. Pursue them unto Hoba and take a great prey—even within sight of the accursed pinnacles of Damascus."

So far had the worthy handler of the weapons of war advanced in his supplications, when through the gusty rise and fall of his voice a thin piping noise made itself heard. It might have been only the wind moaning through the keyhole, thought Roy. Winds whistled and moaned and sobbed and whinnied at House of Muir all the year round. It might also have been a dog whining for admission. For all such were unanimously extruded before worship, except their father's ancient deerhound Clownie, so called from a little Balmaghie farm whence he had come long ago.

But this was not the wind, nor yet a dog anxious to lie at the fire unkicked, but a low human cry, fitful, appealing. Roy was rising hastily to his feet, as his father brought his prayer to a close with a final comprehensive anathema: "Even as said the son of Jesse in the Shiggaion which he made against the works of Cush the Benjaminite—so do Thou confound their work. Put them to naught that have prepared for us the instruments of death. Let them fall into the pit they themselves have digged! Yea, as David sang to the chief musician upon Muth-labben, in the net which they have laid let their own foot be taken. Let the wicked be snared in the work of his own hands! *Higgaion. Selah. Amen!*"

The last word was scarce out of his mouth when Sharon McCulloch moved to the door, anticipating his sons. But Roy looked over his shoulder, his old "besom" of a gun in his hand. She could not well throw wide at that distance. It might be some new dodge of Jonathan Grier's. And Roy smiled grimly and pityingly as he thought of half-a-dozen keepers thus daring to beard the lion in his den.

But when the door opened, nothing was to be seen save the black night and the gaunt outline of the farm buildings still more velvety black across the yard. Nor was anything to be heard save the sough of the wet wind—soft, clammy, and spiritless, dank with the smell of rotting leaves, that came up through the woods of Lowran and the Cleuch of Pluckamin.

Sharon took a step outward, so that he might shut the door behind him and get his eyes more tuned to the obscurity of the night. As he did so, his foot touched something curiously soft. He stooped. His fingers recoiled with a quick thrill of apprehension. What was it the enemy had laid at his door now?

He lifted the small soft thing and carried it indoors. It was a boy, scratched as to face and hands, wet to the skin, and, as Sharon McCulloch swiftly discovered, bleeding from a gunshot wound in the shoulder.

"It's Daid the Deil!" cried Roy in astonishment. "What has brocht him here?"

The two eyes black as sloes twinkled for a moment in the wet chill whiteness of the pinched face.

"If ye please, Strong Mac," said a piping voice, "they shot at me when I was in the tree, an' I fell in the burn. But I hae fetched hame your bag. No yin o' them could get that frae wee Daid!"

And the lids shut down again on the black twinkling sloes.

Thus it was that Daid the Deil won his spurs. It was his patent of knighthood, when he came to himself, that he found Strong Mac's arm about his neck, and heard the voice of his king saying: "I dinna ken how he did it. There's mair spirit in his wee finger than in a' Lowran Schule!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE TALE OF DAID THE DEIL.

THEY sat with him all through the night. Daid the Deil was laid where he had never been before, on a clean bed, among warm blankets, and as he remarked "between napkins a' steekit thegither," which was his first impression of sheets. For Sharon McCulloch had fetched some strange notions home with him from foreign parts, and would as soon have thought of sleeping on the floor as of lying between blankets.

With no unskilful surgery Sharon extracted the pellets of lead with which Daid's shoulder was torn. Luckily for him, the main trunk of the fir against which the boy had been leaning had received most of these. Still, there were enough left to burn red-hot into Daid's poor ill-nourished shoulder.

Not that Daid cared. He, the son of the village poacher, the common butt of Lowran, respected only for his iniquities, lay entranced in Paradise. He was thinking what a small price an aching shoulder was to pay for bliss like this. Then they encouraged him to tell his tale. He felt like a weak mortal suddenly called upon to speak in the full council of the gods. But the mortal had a tongue and was fully equal to the occasion.

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"'It's Daid the Deil!' cried Roy in astonishment.'

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"Weel, ye see," Daid began, turning his beady eyes on the three faces about his bed, all bent eagerly not to miss a word ("Lie doon, ye beast!"), "I had been watching them a' day. I had nae place to gang for onything to eat, when the schule let oot at denner-time. An' sae I waitit in the Roose-end where the Dominie keeps his peats when he fetches them aff the stack. What was it I was waitin' for? It was for you, Strong Mac. Ye ken ye whiles gied me a bite—that is, when ye mindit——!"

Here Strong Mac groaned that he had forgotten so often.

"I didna ken!" he said; "I never jaloosed that ye needit it!"

"It didna maitter," said Daid the Deil soothingly. "I was brawly weel used to doin' withoot. But at ony rate, ye bode in the schule—talkin' to a lassie——"

At this Sharon McCulloch looked very stern, but said nothing. Roy very perceptibly lost his easy confidence. As for James, he gurgled, and docketed the phrase for reference. It was a missile of price.

Such a silence fell that Daid hurried on, instantly conscious that the wheels of his narrative were driving heavily.

"Then ye cam' oot, and I was for followin' ye; but I saw ye hadna ta'en your denner, sae I kenned ye wad be comin' back. Sae I bode whaur I was. Then I heard the lassie talking to the gamekeepie, but ower far aff to catch what they said yin to anither. But as a' that gameys says is bad, I gaed through the plantation and hid ahint the hedge, and there I heard them miscaain' ye, and swearin' they wad catch ye an' a' that—the misleart hounds!

"Sae when the schule was oot, I thocht that they wad bear watchin'. The man in the grey claes wi' the beard was up at the minister's—I saw the twa o' them through the window drinkin' red whusky oot o' glasses as lang as that!" (Daid shaped the palms of his hand into a V.) "Sae I kenned that he couldna be a gamekeepie! Na, if he had been that, he wad hae comed ower the dyke at the back and slinkit to the manse door—a' for to sorn on the minister's Janet! That what gameys do! They are aye for the cupboard! I ken them!"

For the first time Sharon looked an inquiry at his sons, but they shook their heads. Daid felt the interrogative.

"Oh! I sune fand oot wha he was," he said triumphantly. "I slippit roond to Janet mysel'. She's nane siccan a bad sort, though naturally saft wi' onything in knee breeks, is Janet Aitken. I says to her: 'Janet,' I says, 'ye are bonny—will ye gie me a cauld tawtie or onything?'

"Sae of coorse she bade me be aff wi' my flairdie, or she wad set the dowg on me—as if I didna ken that the dowg was at that moment lyin' on the parlour rug, besides bein' a freend o' mine, onyway. But I juist waited on, and when she gied me the tawtie, I says to Janet: 'Ye hae company up the stair?' Wi' a beck o' my heid, like that, I said it."

Daid illustrated, and then with a wry face suddenly recollected his shoulder.

"Aye," says Janet, "sic company as there is no like to be in ony ither hoose in Lowran this month o' Sundays. Yon's the Laird!"

"Whatna laird?"

"Hear till him!" she cried. "Has the lift opened an' the heaven been rainin' lairds for seven days an' seven nichts? Yon's the new Laird o' Lowran—Sidney Latimer, Esquire—and wi' letters after his name. He has been i' the wars, they tell me."

Old Sharon looked at his two sons with a very grim face.

"Aye," he said, "he is juist the seed o' Belial in the second degree!"

Daid went on unmoved.

"I watched Jonathan bywhiles, but there was naething to find oot aboot him. He gaed to the change-hoose and stayed there. Sae I followed and did some messages for auld Lucky. She's no half a bad body, Lucky, if ye keep the richt side o' her. An' when I could, I slippit into the bar. An' then I heard that Jonathan was gatherin' up a cleckin' o' keepers an' sic-like trash, to gang and look for a fox, he said. But I soon kenned whatna fox he was after. Then I gaed back to the schule to warn you, and cam' on you, as I thocht, gaun hame wi' a lassie. The mist was thick. I didna ken the yin o' ye frae the ither, shame be to me! It wasna you, Roy, this time that was wi' the lassie. Jamie there kens wha it was."

At this point the missile which James had been saving up in his armoury lost its value. He discarded it hastily.

"An' by the time I fand my mistak', and got back, Roy was up the Cleuch o' Pluckamin, an' awa'! But I followed the vermin. Aye, Daid kenned the road to win yont them, and that was amang the taps o' the trees. Sae he fand ye and gat your bag, Roy. An' it was a' Daid's ain faut that ony o' them ever saw him. For as the brutes were gaun girnin' hame wi' their finger in their

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mooth, he peltit them wi' branches an' sic-like. Then Jonathan Grier let off his gun at him, an' Daid could juist haud on till they were doon the glen. Then he fell into the pool aneath."

"Was the new laird there when there was shootin'?" asked Sharon very softly. It seemed a simple question, but many things depended upon it.

"Aye," said Daid with equal simplicity, "but I heard him flytin' on Jonathan for drawin' the trigger. He wad haud him responsible for ony mischief, he said. Jonathan was to mind that."

"And then?" queried Roy, eager for the end.

"Oh, the cauld water garred me come to mysel'," continued Daid. "I warsled oot an' up the bank. I lay there a lang time, an' syne I took the face o' the muir. It was a weary lang road, an' the nicht was bitter mirk. But when yince I saw the licht afore me that I kenned was your hoose, Strong Mac, it cam' easier. I juist says to mysel': 'He's yonder, Daid!' An' sae I warsled through!"

* * * * *

The tale of Daid's night-travel sat heavy on the hearts of the three Ishmaels that night. It was not so much a desire for revenge which moved them, as a fixed determination to set things on another footing.

At last, after long thought, Sharon beckoned his two sons into the kitchen. Daid had fallen into a light doze, perhaps cunningly assisted thereto by the pharmacy of Sharon. The head of the house desired to speak with his own.

"Roy and James," he said, "this canna be left as it is. We maun win a richt to a road oot an' in to the Hoose o' Muir—withoot question, withoot deforcement, either frae person, pailing, dyke, yett, barricade, ditch, or ither obstacle. There's nae hoose in Scotland that hasna a richt to a road to kirk an' market. Yet we hae to gang this way and that under cloud o' nicht to win to the King's highway. No that I deny it's pairtly our ain faut—gangin' at yae time by the Cleuch and at anither by Bennanbrack, an' then aiblins the neist time doon the burnside. It becomes us to choose yin o' thae roads an' stick to it. Let it be the Bennanbrack road, an' for these reasons—first, though it's the langest, it's the road that gangs properly wi' the farm o' Hoose o' Muir. For ill as he likes to think o't, we are a pendicle o' that estate, wi' a condition o' service to fulfil, and ony richts we hae we get frae the grant o' the Laird o' Bennanbrack's ain grandfaither!"

"Lord, what wad he gie noo to hae chockit his grandad quietly the nicht afore he subscrivit that dockyment!" said James, who had in him some of the spirit of the lawyer, and saw with a discerning eye the agonies of the present proprietor over the too-generous folly of his ancestor in devising House of Muir to the first McCulloch.

"Second," continued his father, "there's what we will hae to begin and think aboot for anither year—the delivery o' that cairt o' peats at the muckle Hoose o' Bennanbrack. If they could see a single Yule past withoot us layin' them doon, they could tak' awa' the Hoose o' Muir frae us for ever an' a day."

"It's a guid thing, faither," said Roy, smiling, "that it doesna say the last day o' June instead o' December. They could herd us better in the short nichts."

"They will herd us close aneuch this year, ye may depend," said Sharon, knitting his bushy grey eyebrows and letting his hands wander in the direction of a gun that lay on the rack. He took it down and regarded closely the mechanism of the lock.

"Sae frae this forward we will stick to the Bennanbrack road on every occasion—except, as it were, in the dark, an' when we hae larder business on foot."

It was thus that Sharon spoke of the chase of other people's deer, in which he held that there could be no property—these being, as he expressed it, "the wild things that God gied unto oor first forefather Adam, that nae man can tame nor bind, neither the King nor the Prince nor the great ones o' the earth, nor the laws they mak' to grind the face o' the poor. They shallna be bindin' on Sharon McCulloch nor on his children. If a man wants to mak' a property o' a deer as he does o' a sheep or a coo, let him shut it up wi' fences, mark it wi' keel, order its ootgoings and incomings. So be it. Then Sharon McCulloch will neither mix nor mell wi' ony man's deer-park nor stirk-park, his pheasant-yard nor his poultry-yard. But as lang as the bonny broon deer flee lichtfit ower the muir, takin' the dykes like partricks and the moss-hags like birds o' the air, sae lang will I, Sharon, Laird o' Hoose o' Muir, in virtue o' the power God gied to Adam the first man, haud mysel' lord o' the wild deer that rins, an' o' the wild bird that flees, o' the fish that sooms and the serpent that crawls on his belly upon the face o' the yird!"

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"'Oh! you shouldn't, father!' she cried."

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"The lairds micht hae the ethers for me and welcome!" murmured Roy to himself; but aloud he said: "Hae ye thought on how to get the peats to Bennanbrack this year?"

Sharon McCulloch shook his head slowly.

"Yae thing at a time, Roy," he answered gently. "There's the road to be opened and keepit open in spite o' their teeth. But I doot na that mony a plan will rise in oor minds afore the Yule peats maun be laid doon at the door o' Chesney Barwhinnock o' Bennanbrack."

"And the schulin'?" said James, who had his reasons for asking. Roy also looked a little anxious.

"That's as may be," answered Sharon gravely. "There's the road free to ye. It will do no harm to mak' sure that it is clear nicht and mornin'. To-morrow at daybreak we will lay the axe to the root o' the tree, and break a road for our feet to walk upon out to the King's highway."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CAMPAIGN.

On the day that the House of Muir right of way was to be vindicated, Adora Gracie woke early—or, rather, she had slept but little. In the dead heart of the night she had lain long awake—awake with a mind unnaturally clear, acute, lucid with an almost infernal lucidity. She saw the life of her father—her own life—both past and to come. She knew, like the demonstration of a proposition in Euclid, that if he went on as he was doing, Donald Gracie would kill himself, and that before long.

And then?

At first she did not think of herself, so full was she of commending her father to the eternal mercy. But, after, the second question arose—what of herself? She knew the amount of worldly gear in the possession of Donald Gracie—the furniture and about three pounds in the bottom of the tea-caddy. The minister and session would appoint a new schoolmaster, and she would be thrust out on the wet road, homeless as one of the ash-leaves that had fallen at sunrise on the morning of the last frost, and now lay dank and trampled among the mire.

Yet though Adora had lain sleepless for hours, with the happy inconsequence of youth, at six of the morning she fell asleep; and it was at eight when Donald Gracie himself stood at her bedside with a cup of tea in his hand. It was his peace-offering, silently given, as silently accepted. He had come to himself with a taste in his mouth bitter like wormwood, and a thirst which told him, in the first waking moment, what had happened.

He had sought the floor with his naked foot, risen, swayed a moment uncertainly with an aching head and a sinking heart, thought of and resisted with passionate disgust a certain temptation, and stolen away to light the kitchen fire—though yet the trees were no darker than the skies, and the morning breeze was only beginning to shake the great drops of distilled moisture, aslant down the window of the kitchen, and plumply upon the leaden roof of the porch.

Then when the Dominie had washed and dressed himself, he pumped water on the back of his neck, and drank two cups of scalding tea rapidly. Whereupon he was ready to take the third and choicest to the bedside of his daughter.

"Oh! you shouldn't, father!" she cried, when she saw what he had done. "It is wicked to let me lie sleepin' when you——"

His face altered. He feared Adora was about to break their unspoken convention, and refer in the morning to the events of the night before.

"I am feeling very well this morning," he interrupted a little stiffly.

"But have you forgotten?" she cried, sitting up with the cup of tea untouched in her hand; "have you forgotten that—you had an accident in school yesterday? You fell and hurt your head on a bench!"

"So I did—so I did!" he said; "it is true. I had forgotten."

Adora thought wisely that there was no use saying anything about Muckle Sandy Ewan to her father. If anyone had to fight that battle, she would.

"And you kept the school, Adora?" he said tenderly. "There is no one like you!"

"Nonsense, Pater Æneas!" she cried. "And if I did, I had to get Roy McCulloch to help me. That was no great thing to boast of—when you got the tea all alone. But are you sure that your head is better? Let me look at it."

The swelling was certainly reduced, but there was still a considerable contusion.

"I will take the school again to-day," Adora announced; and then, a sudden thought striking her, she added: "but you will come in and help me with the versions."

"Ah!" said her father; "yes, with the versions—though I could very well correct those here."

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"The minister might take it into his head to come in," said Adora craftily, who wished to keep her father under her eye; "you would not want the Doctor to find only me in the desk. It is not that you need *do* anything."

As she spoke, certain visions began to vanish from the mind of Donald. Then a bright thought struck him.

"Friday!" he said. "Why, this is not version day!"

"No," answered the girl promptly, "but I shall want you to set those for next week."

"Ah!" said Donald Gracie, sighing softly.

* * * * *

"Now," said Sharon McCulloch, as he drew on his boots at six o'clock that same morning in the flagged kitchen of the House of Muir, "let a' things be done decently and in order. James, hae ye the notices ready? Roy, the axes? I will tak' the heavy gelleck (crowbar). Your school-bags? Gin ye like, lads—though I see not the great use of these!"

They had breakfasted very early, their father, as before, doing the cooking, while the lads attended to the cattle and ponies, each lighted by an iron lantern as he moved to and fro.

These three did all things during the morning hours in perfect silence. It was not usual for them to speak a word to each other till after their father had "ta'en the Buik." This morning Sharon with unconscious pomp and a certain gloomy grandeur read the song of Deborah the prophetess. His prayer bore upon the same stern pæan.

"Let no more the high-roads lie desolate" (so he prayed), "nor the travellers walk through byways! Make a broad way and an open before our feet! Give us outgate, O Lord! Smite even as thou didst in the camp of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, as thou didst before the city of Samaria, so that those that hate us may bite the dust!"

There was no doubt in the mind of Sharon McCulloch as to his unique position. He and his were the favoured of Providence, even as were those Old Testament saints who spoiled the Egyptians, or those others who, seeing a good land and a pleasant beyond Jordan, crossed over to take possession.

If there were Canaanites, and Hittites, and Hivites, and Jebusites already there, why, so much the worse for them. To the chosen alone pertained the fruits of the land—oil and honey, and running milk and bursting grape—yea, from the snows of Lebanon on the north to where the vineyards of Engedi overlook the salt acreages of the Dead Sea.

So the roe-deer of Barwhinnock, and the pheasants of Lowran, the grouse on the muirs of my Lord Glenkells, and the partridge on the fat furrows of Bodden of Buttonbothan, these could be no property of Canaanite and Philistine, so long as there was an Israelite to lay his eye along a gun-barrel, or one of the seed of Jacob with a finger to pull trigger. And, indeed, admitting the applicability of Old Testament principles, it would have been a bold controversialist who would have proved to Sharon McCulloch that he was in error.

It was the earliest streak of a winter's day—grey, mournful, mist-wrapped—when the axe was laid to the foot of the tree—that is, of the first gatepost. Laboriously had the Laird of Bennanbrack and his men built up the dykes, cross-barred the ancient roadways, and broken down the rude country bridges which spanned the Pluckamin burn and the infant Lowran. But Sharon McCulloch and his sons cut a swathe across the country, clean and broad, laying out a highway passable for man and for beast.

Where there were only locked gates, they contented themselves with breaking the padlock and laying it upon the lintel-post. They then nailed up a notice to it setting that this was the legal road from the farm of House of Muir to kirk and market. When the obstructions were more serious, as where a seven-foot dyke had been built across the path, they made a gap wide enough for a horse and cart to pass, and, with the same law-abiding formality, they piled the stones at the side and stuck their notice on top. A recently planted hedge was uprooted. A strong barricade of young pine trees, crossed with wattles, was shattered by axe-stroke, and the remains extracted by Sharon's crowbar.

It was while this last operation was being completed that the Laird of Bennanbrack arrived. He was a red-faced man of fifty-five, raucous of voice as a crow, and convinced of the divine right of landlords, but with the most limited means of expressing it.

"What's this? What's this? Infernal scoundrels! What are ye doing here? Condemn your souls! Get off my land! I'll have ye all in Kirkcudbright Gaol before the day is over! Here, Lambie, Robertson, take these fellows! Seize them, I say!"

Several game-watchers ran hastily up at

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"'What's this? What's this? Infernal scoundrels! What are ye doing here?'"

their master's call, but fell back at the sight of the three McCullochs—Roy and James with sweeping broad-axes, and their father standing erect leaning upon a crowbar, which in his hands could easily have dashed the brains out of a horse. It was a daunting spectacle and made for peace.

"Go on, cowardly sweeps that ye are!" cried Chesney Barwhinnock, Esquire. "What are ye feared of?"

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"The verra same thing ye are feared o' yoursel'!" cried Tyd Lambie, who was something of a wit—"aye, the deil's selfsame!"

"The law will protect you!"

"Aye, when we are deid!" answered Tyd. "That'll be a great coamfort!"

Sharon McCulloch leaned with his arms folded on the crowbar, watching his foes.

"Gang on, lads," he commanded in his turn, "cut a road through to the King's highway!" So, in spite of the execrations of Chesney Barwhinnock, the work progressed rapidly. Down went the barricades, one after the other, none daring to hinder. The chips flew every way. Mac's axe whirled about his head, a circle of gleaming steel on which the morning sun, rising red, shone with the colour of blood. Opposite him James smote with fine conscientiousness and attention to legality. There! It was done! The three stood victorious and calm amid a pile of splintered chips, fragments of chain, padlocks, pointed sticks—in fact, the completest *chevaux de frise*. The clatter ceased suddenly, as Roy, with his foot, swept the larger fragments on to the Glenkells road. The forces of the enemy were now much augmented, but their desire for attack was not a whit keener. The three stood in the gap which they had made, black against the rising sun, and from the midst of his sons, exceedingly unafraid, Sharon McCulloch of House of Muir spoke with his enemies in the gate.

"Chesney Barwhinnock," he began, lifting himself erect, "the Lord that is on high answer ye according to your blasphemies. With them I hae naething to do. But hear ye a word or twa."

"Robertson, you swingeing rascal, you pitiful coward!" cried the angry man, "go for the military! Run for your life! We will have the rascals before they can escape. We will keep them here—bring the peace officers, the excise—Captain Brabant! Confound your shivering soul! What are ye standing there glowering for?"

"Ye will hold us, Chesney Barwhinnock?" quoth Sharon grimly—"you and your men? Better send them all on your errands, Laird o' Bennanbrack! I warrant they will move the readier in any other direction than if ye order them to fall upon the McCullochs of the House of Muir! As for me, I stand within my rights. Yonder is my property, deeded to me by your ancestor, Chesney! You and your lawyers have reason to ken how firmly. Neither you nor they can break that. There was a road to kirk and market from yonder hoose generations and centuries afore ye were born. We that dwell in the House of Muir are neither birds o' the air to fly, nor fish o' the sea to swim. We maun walk on God's earth—we, our children, our cattle, and the stranger within our gates! Ye have locked the door upon us, as if we had been condemned prisoners—barred the door against us as against thieves. We be free men seeking our own, an' when we find it, we take it. Here we have made a road broad and plain. We have broken access to our rights. Let any dare to molest us at their peril; if ye think otherwise, the courts are open. Interdict us afore the Fifteen. There is enough in the stockin'-foot at the House o' Muir to face ye there, even as I face ye here. But ye canna. Ye daurna. Put up your gates—we will break them doon. Lock your yetts—we will shiver them in pieces as we have done this day. And if ye bring men to withstand us, it is at your own proper risks. Ye have been warned in the presence of witnesses. Moreover, Chesney Barwhinnock, ye are cursed with the curse of the covetous, of the remover of landmarks, of the oppressor of the poor. But for us, as the Lord hath commanded, we will stand in the ways and see. We ask but for the old paths, saying: 'Where is a good way, that we may walk therein and find rest for our souls?' Lads, to the schule wi' ye, your axes upon your shoothers! For me, I return hame, by the way I have made for myself. Woe to the man that cometh fornent me this day! Out o' the way, Chesney Barwhinnock! Vanish from before me, Tyd Lambie; and you, Pate Robison. For the trumpet is blown in Tekoa (which is House of Muir) and I have seen a ball of fire fall in Beth-haccerem—the which I take to be the load o' Yule peats I will deliver at your door, Maister Chesney Barwhinnock, Laird o' Bennanbrack, but *not* Lord o' the hale earth, as ye wad fain hae us believe!"

And with these words Sharon McCulloch went like smoke through the ranks of his enemies, scattering them before the wind of his coming, his crowbar in his hand, and the mighty anathemas and excommunications of Scripture rolling from his lips. They stood open-mouthed, gazing after him as he went forward, never looking behind. It was long before their feelings found vent, and then it came rounded and complete from the lips of the Laird himself.

(*To be continued.*)

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Photo by] [*Gambier Bolton, F.Z.S.*

BONNET MONKEY.

SOME FOUR-HANDED FOLK.

By GAMBIER BOLTON, F.Z.S.

FEW, if any, of the existing groups of the class Mammalia show greater diversity of external appearance than the Monkeys, for we find amongst them creatures both hideous and beautiful in shape, having either long, dog-like, or very short faces, with short noses, snub noses, or prodigiously long ones, with nostrils at the very end of the muzzle, or set far back on the face; some absolutely tailless, or possessing caudal appendages of varying lengths, from a mere stump through all stages up to tails that far exceed the whole of the body in measurement; many of them being prehensile and of great service in clinging round the branches of trees, whilst others are merely ornamental and of little or no use at all. Some are quite bald, others are nearly nude, whilst many are adorned with long hairs which sweep the ground on either side of them, and some are clothed in thick wool or very dense fur. A large number possess check-pouches, which are invaluable to their owners for the temporary storing of hastily gathered food, whilst others are without them; the majority have the full number of fingers and toes, but many are thumbless, others again being provided only with rudimentary thumbs and great toes; and whilst nearly all carry nails on their hands and feet, some have a claw instead of a thumb-nail.

They vary in size from creatures as large as a big dog down to featherweights no larger than squirrels, whilst they range in colour from the most sombre and dingy tones through all stages up to superb tints of vermilion, blue, and purple, worthy of a Macaw or other brilliantly coloured bird; and it is amongst the monkeys, strange to say, that we find the most brightly coloured of all the Mammalia, the Douc, of Cochin China, holding the record in this respect.

Most of them inhabit the steaming tropics, or at least the semi-tropical regions, but, on the other hand, some are found in cold climates, such as Thibet, and in the Himalaya mountains at a height of nine or ten thousand feet above the sea level, where

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JAVA PIGTAIL MONKEY.

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they are frequently exposed not only to cold rains and hail, but even to deep snow and ice. This being the case, one is not surprised to find that monkeys, in past ages, lived wild in Europe as far north as Eppelsheim in Germany, whilst remains have been discovered in the brick-earth of Grays, in Essex, which were identified by the late Professor Owen as belonging to one of the Macaques; therefore it is more than probable that wild monkeys were found in Great Britain in the early ages.

Man and the Apes — the Chimpanzee, Gorilla, Orang Utan, and Gibbon—are separated from them, and are placed in a class by themselves, the monkeys being divided into two groups—*viz.*, the Old World Monkeys and Baboons, and the New World Monkeys and Marmozets, the latter being found in the American continent only, whilst the remainder are scattered over Asia and Africa; the scientific term *Catarrhine* (having nostrils close together and directed *downwards*) being applied to the Old World Monkeys and Baboons, whilst the New World Monkeys and Marmozets are classed as *Platyrhine* (having nostrils widely separated and directed *outwards*), and it is with a few specimens of the Catarrhines, or narrow-nosed Old World monkeys and baboons, that we shall deal in this article.

Those who have only seen these animals in captivity, either caged in zoological collections or being dragged along by a peripatetic organ-grinder with a chain round their waists, can have no idea of the joyousness of their lives, their graceful movements and endless playfulness and rompings when seen in a wild state, amidst their natural surroundings; for whether it be a troop of Baboons in southern Africa coming down at eventide from the mountains to drink at some stream in the valleys before retiring to rest for the night, or a merry group of little Macaques racing up and down a tall tree in India, or a family of Japanese monkeys in the winter time, leaping from branch to branch during a snowstorm, and scattering the white flakes over each other as they gambol in the perfect happiness of freedom and the joyousness of living, the writer can testify that all are forcible contrasts to the wretched prisoner shut up in its cage or tied at the end of a chain, a martyr to *ennui* and boredom, with the seeds of lung disease already sown in its tortured body, a victim to the cause of science or the purpose of amusing an alien race. For this they are torn from their sunlit homes, captured either in traps or by the use of raw spirits, and then, for economy's sake packed in the smallest and generally filthiest boxes imaginable, they are shipped to a damp and uncongenial climate, to a captivity from which death alone can release them, and this in many cases only after a long term of years.

Photo by] [*Gambier Bolton, F.Z.S.*

WILD HÁNUMAN MONKEYS, GULTA, INDIA.

The Catarrhine monkeys are divided into eight groups: (1) the Long-tailed Indian; (2) the Thumbless monkeys; and (3) the Magnabeys (or White Eyelid monkeys), both

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of West Africa: (4) the Long-tailed African; (5) the Macaques; (6) the Celebes monkey; and (7) the Gelada baboon of Abyssinia, being links between the monkeys and (8) the true Baboons; none of them having prehensile tails, which are peculiar to the New World monkeys, but all having patches of hard skin on the hind quarters, called callosities, which are often gorgeously coloured, and are useful in forming a comfortable seat, the upright sitting position being a very favourite one with the Old World monkeys and baboons. The cheek-pouches are found only in this group, the New World monkeys being without them, but they are not common to the whole of the Catarrhines, and those which do not possess them are found to feed on leaves and shoots more than fruits, and have a "peculiarly complex stomach, in which this food can be rapidly stowed away previously to undergoing complete digestion," so that it takes the place of the cheek-pouches in all respects, and does not render the owners so hideous in appearance.

Photo by] [*Gambier Bolton, F.Z.S.*

RHESUS MONKEYS.

Photo by] [*Gambier Bolton, F.Z.S.*

BABOONS AND RHESUS MONKEY.

As a typical example of the first group (the Indian Long-tailed monkeys), the Hánuman or True Langur is shown at home amidst the mountains near Jeypore, the two mothers being on guard against any possible intruder in the shape of a human being or a leopard, whilst the young ones are busily engaged in picking up the sugar which the writer had strewn over the rocks, before the monkeys had made their appearance, and before he retired to his hiding-place, from which

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he was able closely to watch their movements for some time, and to obtain a series of photographs of genuinely wild monkeys "at home." These Hánumans wander about the mountains and deserted villages and temples in troops of from twenty to fifty, of various ages, and all the property of but one male, who jealously defends his harem against any other intruder of his own sex, fighting with desperate courage, the combats sometimes ending in the death of one or even both. It is amongst this group that we find two of the most weird-looking of all the "four-handed" folk, the Snub-nosed monkey of Thibet and the extraordinary Proboscis monkey of Borneo, whose nose is "so enormous in proportion to the face that it presents the appearance of an absolute deformity, and it is very hard to imagine of what possible advantage it can be." It was first discovered in 1781, and it is remarkable that only one has ever reached Europe—the youthful specimen at present in the new Apes'-house in Regent's Park. They are decidedly large monkeys, measuring about five feet over all, and they are a dull yellow colour, the head and upper parts of the body being chestnut brown. The full length of proboscis is only possessed by the males (a specimen being shown in the photograph), the females having much smaller ones, whilst the young of both sexes have very short noses.

Amongst this group, too, is the gaudily marked Douc, already referred to, whose dazzling white, bright chestnut, vivid yellow, and intense black colourings "are extremely brilliant and sharply defined, without any tendency to blend with one another at their junctions, so that this monkey is one of the most gorgeously coloured mammals known."

About a dozen species of the Thumbless monkeys are found in Africa, and they are very similar in many respects to the Langurs, but in all cases the thumb is either totally absent or merely rudimentary in the form of a little knob, which is sometimes provided with a very minute nail. Like the Langurs, they have the peculiarly complex stomach and no cheek-pouches, and it is only in the six groups remaining that we find these remarkable additions. The African Long-tailed group heads the list, and they are also known as Guenons—one who grimaces—and included in it are several monkeys common in most zoological collections, such as the Vervet, the Grivet, the Green, the Mona, and the Diana monkeys, all of them very docile and easily trained, but showing a tendency to become savage as they grow old, so that caution should be used before purchasing any of them as pets for the house.

The Mangabeys, or White Eyelid monkeys, form the third group, their peculiar first name having been given to them by the French naturalist Buffon, from a mistaken idea that they came from the district of Mangabe in Madagascar, whereas they are found in West Africa only, and on the opposite side of the continent to Madagascar.

It is with the members of the next group, the Macaques, that we can deal most fully, as with a single exception (the North African or Barbary Macaque, found also at Gibraltar) all are Asiatic, and are imported into Great Britain and Europe in very large numbers every year, for exhibition in menageries and also for training as performers in public places of amusement, for, like the African Long-tailed monkeys, the majority of them are very docile and are clever at learning tricks, but they frequently turn vicious as old age approaches. Included in this group are the well-known Bonnet monkey, the true Indian Macaques, the Rhesus, the Pig-tailed, the Stump-tailed, the Magot or Barbary Macaque, and others, all to be seen frequently in the British and Continental Zoos, many of them being kept as pets in most parts of the world, with the exception only of the coldest regions.

The Bonnet monkey is well named; the hair on the top of the head, instead of falling over the forehead, stops before it reaches there, and forms a little *toque*, whilst there is a distinct parting in front. They are found all over southern India, and are as common in the villages as they are in the forests, and amuse themselves by stealing grain from the shops of the *bhanias*, or native grain-sellers. The one shown in the photograph was busily engaged in searching for small particles of dust on its foot—the popular idea, that these creatures spend most of their time in searching for parasites, being quite an erroneous one, as nothing of the kind could exist for a moment on any portion of a healthy monkey's body without being quickly captured. The "opposable" great toe is shown very plainly in the foreground. The Indian Macaques make some of the nicest of pets, and when of the dwarf species, like the two sitting together on the branch in the photograph, are not too large to be kept in a roomy cage in the house during the winter time; both of these having survived more than one severe winter in England, the taller one being allowed the free run of a house and

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INDIAN MACAQUES.

From the copyright photo by Gambier Bolton, F.Z.S.

garden in North London, after he passed out of the writer's possession; whilst another of the same kind lived for three years, including two extra cold winters, in a dog-kennel, which he shared with a friendly spaniel, in the North of England.

The Rhesus, or Bengal monkey, called *bandar* by the Hindoos, is one of the best known of all. These are frequently shipped to Europe in batches of fifty or more, whilst they are common in the forests, villages, and temples of northern India. At Simla, the

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Jako Hill is always full of them, notwithstanding that it stands at an elevation of nearly ten thousand feet above the sea level, whilst they may be met with in most parts of northern India, in company with the native jugglers, who teach them to go through clever performances, generally assisted by a dog or giant goat.

The Pig-tailed monkey is a sturdy, well-shaped animal, with long and powerful limbs, and a dog-like muzzle very similar to that of the Baboons. They are found in Tenasserim and from there right through the Malay Peninsula, including also Borneo and Sumatra. The natives train them to go to the tops of the tall cocoanut trees, where they select the ripe nuts, and, breaking them off, let them fall to the ground, the owner making a good living by receiving ten per cent. of the nuts collected by his monkey. The "piggies" make capital pets, and the one photographed belonged to the late Yates Carrington, the animal painter, before it came into the writer's possession, and was painted into more than one picture for the Royal Academy, and also appeared in the book called "Teufel the Terrier," in which he acted as understudy to 'Teufel," the hero.

Photo by] [*Gambier Bolton, F.Z.S.*

JAPANESE MONKEY.

The Stump-tailed Macaque, of Japan, is very similar to the Pig-tailed, both in size and shape, but is covered with thick fur, has a mere stump of a tail, and is not quite so long in the muzzle. They are a greenish brown colour, with salmon-red face, and "Mata" (the one illustrated) was bought by the writer from a temple in Tokyo, and, although quite tractable with his owner, was vicious when handled by others, having a special dislike for females of all ages. He was not only in perfect health and coat during our English winters, but if exercised when snow was on the ground, fairly revelled in it, rolling over and over in perfect enjoyment. They are captured by the use of *saki*, a strong Japanese spirit, which, being placed in bowls underneath the trees that they are known to frequent, soon prostrates them helplessly drunk on the ground, when they are easily captured and carried off to the towns for sale.

The Magot, or Barbary Macaque, is a fairly large animal, with a face not unlike that of "Mata," but is absolutely tailless, the only one of the group which has this peculiarity. They are found in the north-western corner of Africa, in Algeria and Morocco, and a few are found on the rock at Gibraltar and in other parts of southern Spain, where they were probably introduced originally by importation from the opposite shores, although it is possible that they may be directly descended from the European Macaques of prehistoric times, already mentioned, for it is certain that this monkey was known to the ancient Greeks. About twenty of them exist on the Rock at Gibraltar, the sergeant in charge of the signalling station at the top being told off to prevent their capture or destruction.

The Celebes monkey, from the islands of that name in the Pacific, is the sole representative of the sixth group of the Catarrhines, and its appearance closely resembles the Pig-tailed Macaque, but it is jet black in colour, and the tail is a mere knob, scarcely an inch in length. They have heavy and protruding eyebrow-ridges, and peculiar swellings on the sides of the face (closely resembling their near neighbours the Baboons in this last respect), and they have large cheek-pouches, whilst on the top of their heads is a tuft of black hairs forming a crest. The one brought home by the writer was exceedingly tame, but felt the cold in this country far more than the ordinary Macaques, dying eventually in the Apes'-

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Photo by] [*Gambier Bolton, F.Z.S.*

SNUB-NOSED MONKEY (VERY RARE).

house in the Zoological Gardens, in spite of every care and attention, and plenty of artificial heat.

The first of the Baboons is the Gelada, from southern Abyssinia, a large and ferocious-looking animal, carrying a heavy mane, which, in conjunction with its long, dog-like muzzle, closely coated hind-quarters and tufted tail, somewhat resembles a black poodle in appearance, with an extra amount of hair on the fore-quarters. Placed in a group by itself, as forming a link between the Celebes monkey and the true Baboons, it so closely resembles the latter in habits and disposition that it is not necessary to refer to it further. The last group—*viz.*, the true Baboon, is made up of about eight species of the most hideous-looking of all the apes and monkeys; the great length of their snouts, the swollen look of their upper jaws and tumour-like structures on the face, making them veritable night-mares of ugliness. They are not found in the Orient at all, but only in Africa and the countries lying to the north of the Red Sea, a few of those to be seen from time to time in European menageries being the Arabian, the Chacma, from South Africa, the Anubis, the Yellow Baboon, and the repulsive-looking Drill and Mandrill of West Africa.

They have brightly coloured patches on their faces, and huge callosities, powerful fore and hind limbs, and carry enormous tusks, with which they have been known to meet the leopard in combat and to kill him, three or four old males being more than a match for even so dangerous a foe as this. It is remarkable that from early Egyptian sculptures we should find that the ancients trained these savage creatures to gather fruit, which they threw down from the trees to their masters, in exactly the same way that the Pig-tailed monkey does in the Far East to-day.

Sir Samuel Baker's description of a troop of Baboons, as they appeared to him, is so exactly what the writer has often seen in southern Africa, that he is tempted to conclude with the quotation: "It is very amusing to watch these great male baboons stalking majestically along, followed by a large herd of all ages, the mothers carrying the little ones upon their backs, the latter with a regular jockey-seat riding most com-

Photo by] [*Gambier Bolton, F.Z.S.*

PROBOSCIS MONKEY.

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fortably, whilst at other times they relieve the monotony of position by sprawling at full length and holding on by their mother's back hair. Suddenly a sharp-eyed young baboon discovers a bush well covered with berries, and, his greedy munching being quickly observed, a general rush of youngsters takes place, and much squabbling for the best place ensues amongst the boys. This ends in great uproar, when down comes a big male, who cuffs one, pulls another by the hair, bites another on the hind-quarters just as he thinks he has escaped, drags back a would-be deserter by his tail and shakes him thoroughly; and thus he shortly restores order, preventing all further disputes by sitting under the bush and quietly enjoying the berries by himself."

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A FOOL IN HIS FOLLY.

By E. E. KELLETT.

I SUPPOSE none of you chaps remember Coulson, do you? He wasn't at the school long, and he must have left a good three years ago. I was here when he came, and thought a lot of myself, for it was my second term. A queer chap he was, tall and thin, with round pebble spectacles, and great peering eyes—the sort of chap that you could have on by the hour without his knowing. Hoppy christened him Verdant Green at once, and then shortened it to Verdy; and the name stuck, you'll hear why. If he *looked* funny, he *talked* funnier, all big words and strange ideas. From the first glance I detected that he wasn't a fit sort of fellow for our school, so I went up to him with a few other chaps and said to him: "What have *you* come here for?"

Well, his answer bowled us all over. "Father sent me here to improve my mind," he said.

This was such a staggerer that for some time even Hoppy couldn't find anything to say; and if Coulson hadn't looked such a tempting sort of ass, we might have left him alone then and there, and this story would never have been told. But no one could look at him without seeing he was the kind of fellow made to be drawn; and after a little pause Hoppy tried him again.

"Can you sing?"

"Why do you want to know?" asked Coulson, looking timidly at him; "you've never heard me try, have you?"

"Well, whether you can or not, you've got to sing at the new chaps' concert to-night, you know."

Coulson seemed much upset at this announcement. "I never anticipated this," he observed. "I was prepared for a little annoyance at first, but not of this kind." The chaps stared at him as he rolled out his big words; Roberts suggested *sotto voce* that Coulson was a bit dotty.

"I'm really afraid I can't," said Coulson.

"That's unlucky," replied Hoppy; "but you'll have to do it, anyhow."

"I can recite a little," said Coulson suddenly, as if the chaps would be delighted to hear it. "Do you think a recitation would do as well?"

"We might take it," replied Hopkins, "if it was a decent one. What sort of things can you do?"

"Oh, 'Horatius,' or 'Marmion,' or Gray's 'Elegy.'"

"Anything you like, provided it's lively."

"I'll try to contrive that," said Coulson. After this the conversation languished; things seemed likely to be slow.

"I'll recite the 'Elegy' to you now, if you like," said Coulson, as if a bright thought had struck him.

"Not for worlds," said Hoppy. "Keep it till after tea. We *will* have him on then," he muttered to me. "Gray's 'Elegy,' indeed!"

"Is there a Literary Society here?" inquired the new boy irrelevantly.

"Why do you want to know?" asked Hopkins.

"Because if there is, I should like to join it. Father always said there was nothing so likely to improve my mind as becoming a member of the Literary Society."

"There's one——" I was beginning, when Hoppy, suddenly conceiving one of his bright ideas, struck in—

"How old are you?"

"Fifteen and a half."

"Can't join, then; you have to be sixteen before they let you in." This was one of Hoppy's inventions, and the chaps knew it; but whenever he began with an obvious crammer, they knew they could expect interesting developments, so they said nothing; though, if Coulson had been sharp, he might have seen by their expectant glances that they were looking out for a good draw. But he didn't see; he merely blinked complacently and said—

"That is unfortunate. Well, I suppose I must postpone my ambitions for a time."

"Why not try the Junior Lit.?" asked Hoppy. The fellows became more attentive as they saw the line he intended to follow becoming clearer.

"Is there one?" asked Coulson.

"Recently formed," answered Hops. It was, indeed; *very* recently formed. "Montague, here, is a member; so's Roberts,

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there, and Brown, there. I'm president. That's it, you chaps, isn't it?"

All agreed; they were entering into the spirit of the thing now. "You've come just in the nick of time," went on the self-styled president; "why shouldn't you join?"

"I should be most pleased to do so," said Coulson, who obviously suspected nothing, as why should he?

"You'll have to pass, of course."

"Pass—how?"

"You have to be elected. First you read a poem and an essay, and if the members think them good enough, they'll let you through. You see, I'm not *promising* you'll get in; but you're pretty safe if your stuff is fairly good. I've a casting vote, too."

"I can but try," replied Coulson.

"You've every reason to hope," said Hoppy. "Montague, here, got in on his essay; his poem was beastly, but his essay was so good that the chaps let him in."

"How did *you* get in?"

"I! Why, as founder and president, I had a unique position. But as to the others, of course we have to be careful. We are a select society. We don't admit everybody."

"When does it meet?"

"Monday evenings at nine. Have your things ready by then, and you'll get in, never fear. But there's another thing."

"What's that?"

"Have you brought a hamper?"

"Yes; but what has that to do with the Literary Society?"

"Everything. In the Senior Lit. they always begin with coffee and cake, which is put down to the bill. *We* have light refreshments, too; but as ours don't go down in the bill, the members in turn provide them."

Hoppy's line, which generally had reference to the commissariat, was now revealed, and all of us manifested a decided increase of interest in the matter. "Yes," I said corroboratively, "we all of us give in turn."

"Generally," said Hopkins, "the candidate gives it. When Montague read his essay, he gave us a jolly good spread, and you'd better do the same." Perhaps Hoppy was here using the figure of speech called equivocation, an art in which he was unrivalled in the junior school.

"Does it help to your election?" asked Coulson.

"It doesn't secure it," answered the president, "but it establishes a good impression."

"Well," replied Coulson, "I'll see what I can do. I must make some sacrifices to get into the Society, I suppose."

"And to improve your mind," added Hoppy.

"Of course, to improve my mind. I suppose you really are an improving society?"

"Very," replied Hops; "we're really intellectual; you'll find that out soon enough."

"Well, then, I think I may promise a hamper."

"Do," said Hoppy. "Monday at nine, remember." At this point the bell rang for tea, and our little assembly broke up.

"He's got an enormous hamper," said Hoppy to me, when Coulson was out of hearing. "I caught a sight of it as it came off his cab. Did you ever see such a ninny? He's far better than little Jones. We shall have no end of a good time with him."

"Yes," I replied; "and it's lucky he *looks* an ass, too; or we mightn't have found it out so soon."

In the evening the new boys' concert was a great success. One or two new fellows sang some music-hall songs in fine style; and Coulson, who gave his Gray's "Elegy" like a professional reciter, with all the proper action and emphasis, was received with tumultuous applause. Half the chaps in the house were members of the newly formed Junior Literary Association, and had been warned by Hoppy not to endanger the feast of Monday by any untoward demonstrations. "Keep him up to the scratch," he said. Accordingly they cheered every verse with the utmost enthusiasm, applauded his action, and, at "climbing his knees the envied kiss to share," all but brought the house down. Coulson blinked round through his spectacles obviously quite unsuspicious of their real feelings. He seemed surprised and almost awed by his popularity. His first bow of acknowledgment was such a success that he was recalled several times, each time going through the bow with more success than before. The preparation bell came all too soon for the fellows, who would have liked "Horatius" and "Marmion" also.

During the next few days strange rumours ran about the place. Coulson was swotting so hard, in order to improve his mind, that the chaps thought, if he wasn't an idiot already, he'd soon become one. As for Hoppy, he resolved to give him his head. "Leave him alone a bit," he confided to me, "and we shall be able to have him on as much as ever we like." At night, not content with the labours of the day, Coulson got leave to stay up to swot at his essay and his

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poem. He received occasional encouragement from Hoppy, who looked in every now and then, to tell him to buck up and do them well, and he'd be sure to get in. Coulson thanked him for his kind attentions and said he'd do his best. "I've written ten pages of the essay," he said appealingly, "and twenty lines of the poem. Do you think that with the hamper I might get through?"

"The hamper's a rare thing for putting the chaps in a good humour," said Hoppy oracularly; and Coulson, with a sigh of pleasure, turned to his labours. He did, indeed, take a lot of pains, poor chap, looking half through the dictionary to find rhymes, and polishing his essay till it shone like a butter-dish. I felt really sorry for the poor chap, knowing what a fool he was making of himself, and all for nothing. Sometimes I was almost inclined to tell him all about it —"Look here, there's no such thing as a Junior Literary Society; Hoppy's only having you on; the chaps are all laughing at you, and only want your hamper, you know"—but I couldn't round on Hoppy. Besides, I wanted a share of the hamper myself.

"'Father sent me here to improve my mind.'"

Well, the expected night came. Heaps of chaps had heard of the scheme, and the enthusiasm for literature was enormous. But Hoppy was firm. There were to be twenty members only, and, to make sure no more came, the meeting was held in our house, so that no brutes from other houses could get in.

During prep. Coulson got very nervous. I sat near him. The poor chap was trembling all over; excitement and suspense were plainly too much for him. At last, about a quarter of an hour before the end, he got up and asked the master if he might go out—he didn't feel well. "He looks ill," I thought. "I hope to goodness he'll turn up at the meeting."

After prep., as we were moving off to our houses, I told Hoppy of my doubts. "Pooh! he's all right. He was polishing up his poem. It isn't *he* that'll be ill after," he observed. "The sick-room'll be crowded to-morrow. Ah! there he is, lugging up his hamper." Hoppy went and helped him with the task. All the members were waiting in the house-room, which was fitted up with chairs and sofas from the prefects' studies. On a table lay an assortment of plates, knives, forks, and spoons. Hoppy took the easiest chair, scornfully kicking out little Jones. "A good show, this," he said, pointing to the hamper, which contained Coulson's contributions to the real business of the evening.

The president was the first to address the meeting. "Gentlemen," he observed, "I wish, before we begin, to congratulate you on reassembling again for the first meeting of another session." As this was the first meeting that had ever been held at all, some of the chaps were a little puzzled; but they looked at the hamper and cheered all the same.

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"You are aware, from experience," he went on, "of the means we adopt for the election of new members. All have to read an essay and a poem, which the society, on hearing, decides to be worthy or unworthy to secure the election of the candidate." This was a long sentence, and Hoppy was glad of the cheers in order to pause and take breath.

"Mr. Coulson," proceeded the president, "is our candidate this evening; and he is going to read to us an essay entitled 'The John Wesley: a Pirate Tale' (loud and long-continued applause), "and a poem entitled 'The Book: Canto I., the Creation; Canto II., the Fall.'" (Cheers again, but less prolonged and enthusiastic).

"But you are also aware that on all the previous occasions of election the candidate has provided light refreshments for the sustentation of members." All were aware; for Hoppy had threatened them if they weren't; and so the cheering now was positively deafening. When order was restored, Hoppy said: "Here, then, are the plates and the knives; Mr. Coulson will doubtless now proceed to open his hamper, in order that we may partake of the refreshments." (Loud cheers and cries of "Buck up, Verdy!" "Chuck it up, and be quick about it!")

"Swotting so hard, in order to improve his mind."

Verdy bucked up accordingly. Hauling the hamper into the corner, he unlocked it. There was a rush to grab things; but Hoppy insisted on order. "Sit down, Jones, you little fool!" he shouted; "if you don't, you shan't have a scrap." Jones sat down, and soon afterwards, by means of threats, kicks, and shoves, Hoppy had tactfully managed to secure that Roberts and I should do the waiting, on condition we had a little extra, while he did the distributing, on a tacit but firm understanding that he was rewarded for the trouble. We worked like niggers. Bending down into the depths of the hamper, Coulson pulled out a huge ham. I passed it on to Hoppy joyfully. "Carve that," I said; "it'll save ours, you know."

Hoppy grinned, and carved huge slices, which Roberts took round on plates to the hungry members.

Next followed a tongue. "Good again," I thought. I had a tongue in my hamper, which would thus last a little longer. This, too, Hoppy carved, keeping the best part for himself. There was some pressed beef and half-a-dozen tins of potted meat and bloater paste. These Coulson took round, for Roberts and I had now begun to take our reward and were too busy to do any waiting. He ladled out the potted stuff on to our plates with a teaspoon. Next he followed with pickles, which he tumbled out in great profusion. He didn't seem to be eating anything himself; but if he *did* choose to be generous, was that any business of ours? On we went eating. No sooner was the first course over on any plate than the kind Coulson loaded it with jam, marmalade, and huge chunks of cake. Everybody was happy. It was a good twenty minutes before all was over, and then Hoppy, lying back in his easy-chair, and clasping his hands over his waistcoat, announced that the house would now proceed to public business. "Finish that orange, Jones," he said; "you're

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making a beastly row. How can we hear the papers? The business before the house is an essay entitled 'The John Wesley: a Pirate Tale,' by Mr. Coulson."

Coulson locked the hamper and stood on it. The chaps were rather slack after eating so much, so that they were inclined to listen; and it was worth it. The tale was a grand one; it was about a pirate in the Indian Ocean, who called his ship the *John Wesley*, and dressed himself up like a missionary. Instead of the red flag, he floated a Salvation Army banner; and his crew carried their ammunition in pouches that looked like clasp Bibles. Under this disguise the pirate had no difficulty in driving a lucrative trade; he used to draw up alongside merchant ships on Sundays and propose a service. The merchants always agreed, and the pirate-captain, with his Bible and his sword, and his pious-looking men about him, would board the ship and hold a rousing service. In the middle of the service he would suddenly cry out, "Avast! yo, heave ho!" and drawing his pistol, shoot the merchant-captain and offer the crew the choice between walking a plank and becoming pirates. They generally chose the latter; the new ship was called the *General Booth*, and the two together would sail after new plunder. In this way the pirate became a very wealthy man. There were grand bits about hand-to-hand fights and narrow escapes, too, which made your blood run cold. There was only one funny thing in it, and that came at the end, when Coulson said we should see it was an allegory about not judging by appearances. However, we cheered him like mad, and thought even the poem might not be so slow, after all.

Canto I. of the poem was, I am sorry to say, *very* slow. It was a versification of the first two chapters of Genesis. Canto II., the Fall, was worse. I can only remember a little of it:—

> And Eve did think the apple very nice,
> And so she acted on the snake's advice,
> She ate the apple to her heart's content,
> But bitterly did afterwards repent.

"I say, Verdy," cried Hoppy, who was yawning with weariness, "chuck this. It's beastly slow."

"That's all," said Verdy; "it's an allegory, too, you know."

"Well, then," said the president, "there's nothing to do but to vote. I think we ought to elect Mr. Coulson; he's given us some awfully good grub, and his tale was a regular stunner. Who proposes?"

"I do," said Roberts, finishing a pickle which remained over.

"Who seconds?"

"I do," said I. As I spoke I polished off the last slice of the tongue.

"Those in favour!" cried the president.

Coulson was unanimously elected. "Speech, speech!" resounded from all parts of the room. Blushing and stammering, he rose and acknowledged the honour in a regular treat of a harangue. He had always longed to become a member of the Literary Society; his father wished him to improve his mind; he was sure nothing improved the mind like Junior Literary Associations; and he hoped they'd all enjoyed their food. If they liked it, he concluded, he did not grudge the expense. (Loud cheers.) Coulson looked, while the cheering was on, more like Verdant Green than ever. We all thought we'd never seen such an idiot of a chap. But we hadn't the heart to tell him what a lark we'd had out of him. So far from it that Hoppy proposed a vote of thanks in a neatly expressed speech; and then we all went off to bed, feeling that it was almost worth coming to school to have such a good time. Some of the chaps were a little troubled with internal aches, but they didn't mind the pain in the glory.

Next morning, as we were going in to breakfast, Hoppy seemed to have recovered his appetite. "Got any grub, Slops?" he said to me.

"Don't know, I'm sure. Did we finish that potted lobster yesterday at tea?"

"Think we did. Anyhow, we'd better be on the safe side. Can't live on school food. You might go down, old chap, and bring up a tongue or some jam. You can afford to be late; I can't — had a dozen late marks already this week."

So down I went to fetch the grub. Hoppy's hamper and mine were together. I looked in his first. "By Jove!" I said, "we've been going it. Hardly a thing left. Where's that tongue?"

There was no tongue or ham to be seen; only a few biscuits and a tin or two of pickles. I began to get anxious. Had some fellow bagged them? I looked in my own, but here there was the same emptiness. My ham had disappeared, several of my pickle-jars, half my tins of potted meat, and nearly all my jam. I was desperate. I looked in other hampers—not a sign of either ham or tongue, but the same aching void everywhere. Furious and helpless, I rushed upstairs and in to breakfast. I took my late mark without

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a murmur—the great sorrow had swallowed up the little trial.

"Well," said Hoppy, "where's the tongue?"

"Hops," I answered solemnly, "they're all gone—ham, tongue and all. Some chap's prigged them."

He whistled. "Sure?" he said.

"Certain," I replied. "Why, the hampers were nearly empty."

"A rum go," said Hoppy, looking unusually gloomy. "A beastly thing having a thief in the house. I suppose we shall have to tell Vernon, and then there'll be a row. We shall have to hide away our pipes and tobacco."

"I wonder who it can be," I reflected.

"I wonder. Can't be any of last term's chaps, anyhow. We know *them*."

"Must be a new fellow," I said logically enough.

"Who are they? Let's see—there's Cathcart and Higham—they *look* all right. Then there's Coulson. He's too much of an ass."

We were both nonplussed for a while. Hoppy sat munching his bread reflectively. As for me, I couldn't touch anything. Suddenly, to my unutterable surprise, my friend burst out into a roar of laughter that nearly got him a hundred lines from the prefect at the end of the table.

"I see!" he cried.

"See what? Don't get us a huge 'impot,' whatever you see."

"Why, don't you see——?" he roared again, but more cautiously this time.

"Stop laughing, you fool!" I said authoritatively. "Did you do it yourself?"

"Not exactly," he answered.

"Not exactly! What *do* you mean?"

"Why," he said, "we've eaten it already."

"When? You *must* have tucked in. I haven't touched the tongue myself, and as for the ham—we haven't had half that hamper, I tell you!"

"What about last night?" he said. "Don't you see now? 'If you've liked the food, I don't grudge the expense!' Verdant Green, indeed!"

"What's all this rot?" I cried. "You can't mean——?"

"But I *do* mean it. It's us that's been green, I think." (Hoppy wasn't always grammatical when he was excited). "He's a clever one. Fancy making us eat all our own stuff, and getting a vote of thanks for it, too!"

"By Jingo!" I cried, "is that it?"

"Of course it is. That was *our* ham we tucked into yesterday, and *our* tongue, and Roberts's pickles, and Brown's jam. Well, he *is* a deep one. What wouldn't I give to look such a fool as he does!" Hoppy stopped, absorbed in admiration. I pulled him up. "We look fools enough, anyhow," I said. "A nice mess you've made of it!"

"Don't be angry, Slops," he said. "Admire genius wherever you see it. Verdy's diddled us, there's no mistake about that, and I fancy he'll diddle us again if we try it on."

"But it's a nice thing if he's to steal our stuff for nothing," I protested.

"Pooh! you *are* blind. Didn't you see he didn't touch a thing of it? He gave *us* our ham and tongue, and *we* carved it and gave it to the other chaps, and Roberts gave out his own stuff, too. It's about the neatest thing I ever saw."

"Then *that's* why he was ill in prep.!" I cried, as various lights burst in on my mind.

"Of course it was. *And* think how he got us to lug up our own grub from downstairs! *And* to look such a dotty old ass all the time! Why, the whole thing's the best thing ever done, and I shall tell him so."

"I shouldn't, if I were you," I remonstrated.

"I shall, though. He's a genius, and I take off my cap to him. And all that stuff about the allegory and judging by appearances! It was splendid! Look at him now, looking all over a fool. Why, he's a regular Shakespeare. Sloppy, you and I had better make an alliance with him."

"Well," I answered, "you know best."

"Catch him going out at breakfast," replied Hoppy, "and we'll arrange about terms."

Coulson seemed a trifle anxious when he saw the two of us coming his way; for between us we were a tough pair to manage; but he was soon reassured when Hoppy, in tones of unaffected admiration, told him how he respected him. "I shall let all the school know what a clever chap you are," he said.

"Don't do that," cried Verdy anxiously.

"Why ever not?"

"Because it would spoil all the fun. It's the greatest lark in the world to fool chaps by making them think they fool you."

"There's a lot in that," said Hoppy. "But you *are* a genius, and no mistake. Let's bind an alliance."

The alliance was bound, and it lasted till Coulson left.

"You see," he said, "you told me that

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"He hoped they'd all enjoyed their food. If they liked it, he did not grudge the expense."

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newly elected members always provided the grub, didn't you?"

"We did," said Hoppy.

"Well," answered Verdy, "*you* were new members, don't you see, and so I thought *you* should provide it."

"Quite right, too," said Hops, who had a keen sense of justice, fitting in one who was going in for the law.

"Well," said Coulson again, "now the alliance is formed, you shall have some of *my* ham and tongue. I put it away in my box; we'll share it."

"You're a jewel," said Hoppy.

"On one condition," said Coulson.

"What's that?"

"That you still call me Verdy and pretend to the chaps that I'm an ass."

MY PRETTY CHILD.

MO *paisde deas*, I did not know
How cold the winter's blast could blow
Into her heart, with what despair
Earth drew her bloom and blossom fair,
How lone a man might come and go
When you were here—how could I know?

How could I know, my pretty child,
When gracious summer looked and smiled,
Soft were the sleeping roses' breath
Who did not know a dream of death,
Like him who stood in glad surprise
At love discovered in your eyes,
That fleeting time so slow could pass
I did not know, *mo paisde deas*.

My pretty child, I did not know
How I had watched you come and go,
How I had listened for your song,
How short your shy caress, how long
Your absence was, till praying I
Looked up to Heaven with a cry
To call you back, there saw a star
And knew how far God's gardens are.

DORA SIGERSON.

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"PRESENTING A NEW-COMER." FROM A PAINTING BY L. ALVAREZ.

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THE INDUSTRIAL REAWAKENING OF SOUTH AFRICA.

By Neville Edwards.

Illustrated from Photographs by the Author.

NOW that South Africa is at last awakened from the hideous nightmare of war, in which she has lain prostrate for nearly three years, she is once again attracting the attention of the world to her wondrous stores of jewels and gold. As everyone is aware, nowhere else on the face of the earth are there such wonderful diamond-mines as those at Kimberley, or such treasures of gold as in the country of our late enemies, over which the British Flag now proudly waves.

The diamond-fields being older, as well as on account of their absolutely unique character, claim attention first.

Kimberley, "where the diamonds come from," is a place which always possesses more than ordinary interest. Its long-protracted siege and gallant relief turned the eyes of the whole world to that dusty, mean-looking corner of the British Empire, a spot which is nevertheless its chief jewel-shop, from which over £4,000,000 worth of gems find their way every year.

For Kimberley is the veritable home of the diamond. It is true that these extraordinarily prized bits of stone, for which men and women will sell their souls and bodies, are found in other places as well; but they are mere homeless vagrants, so to speak, lying scattered about in the earth as if dropped there by chance, with nothing in the nature of a mine to indicate their origin.

THE GREAT HOLE OF THE DE BEERS DIAMOND-MINE, KIMBERLEY, AS IT IS TO-DAY.

But at Kimberley it is a different case altogether. It is as if the coiner of these valuable brilliants had been here tracked to his lair. When you enter the great mines there, you feel that you are in one of Nature's laboratories, where, in the beginning of time, the mighty Alchemist, in moments of relaxation from bringing down and lifting up continents, produced these glittering playthings.

What is a diamond? Scientists will tell you that if you subject one to an intense heat, your priceless stone will be resolved into nothing but a black lump of pure charcoal.

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Photo by] [*J. Trim, Kimberley.*

KIMBERLEY MINE, SHOWING OPEN WORKING AND WIRES IN 1874.

But alas! these scientists fail to explain, what each one of us would like to know for his own exclusive use, how to make a satisfactory diamond out of a bit of charcoal. As a matter of fact, indeed, one or two men actually have succeeded in producing diamonds out of it, but a gem only the size of a pin's head is the usual result. The method, however, by which they achieved this forms a probable clue to the way Nature created hers at Kimberley. Man's way has been to immerse particles of charcoal into molten iron brought to a tremendous heat, and then, by suddenly cooling the mass, to produce, by its shrinking, an enormous pressure such as no other means could give. Then, on breaking open the iron, the tiny gems are found within.

In the bowels of the earth we know there is intense heat, we know there was the pressure caused by shrinkage, and, we believe, hence the diamonds. Only old

Photo by] [*J. Trim, Kimberley.*

THE SURFACE WORKS OF THE KIMBERLEY MINE IN 1874, SHOWING HORSE-WHINS USED FOR HAULING THE ORE UP THE WIRES.

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Dame Nature has got the secret in that witch's hat of hers of making them a decent size.

At Kimberley there is special justification for this theory of how the diamonds came there. For there can be little doubt that what we to-day know as diamond mines our prehistoric ancestors knew as volcanoes. Though the country now lies so flat that, as Commandant Cronje put it, "there's no hill between Kimberley and Bloemfontein higher than an ant-heap," yet it is pretty evident that these mines, which are great circular pipes going straight down into the bowels of the earth, were once high, active craters filled with molten lava. It is in this "blue ground," as it is called, which is very similar in appearance to the lava which ran from Mont Pélee, that the diamonds are found.

When the mines were first discovered, no one dreamed of the illimitable depth to which these craters seem to go. In fact, South Africa found it hard to realise the good fortune which had been suddenly flung at her feet. For the diamond-fields were discovered at a time when things were as bad as they well could be. "It is always a feast or a fast in South Africa," is a well-known Colonial saying; and truly when things are bad there, they are very bad. Certainly nothing could have been much worse than the position of things in 1867. Merchants were failing all over the country, credit was exhausted, and agriculture at its last gasp. Then, like a happy waking from an evil dream, came the news that diamonds had been discovered. "*Ex Africa semper aliquid novi*" is a saying dating from the days of Pliny, and "Out of Africa always something new" it was felt to be indeed, when diamonds were found in such an unlikely, outlandish spot as that where Kimberley now stands.

IN A JOHANNESBURG GOLD-MINE, EIGHT HUNDRED FEET BELOW SURFACE.

For the district is such an "abomination of desolation." A raw, red country of blank, barren earth, with nothing on its surface but tiny, withered-looking sage bushes at wide intervals, like the tufts of wool on a Hottentot's head. A land where it takes three acres to keep a sheep, and then the animal gets more exercise than food.

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There was no railway to the north in those days. What earthly use was it to run a line into such an utterly barren and unpromising waste, with no inhabitants but a few half-starved Boer farmers and traders at long distances apart, and a few wretched Griquas and Bushmen living on snails and locusts? Yet, out of this desert, as it then was, came one day the news that a trader named John O'Reilly had got what looked to be "very like a diamond," from a little Griqua boy whom he had seen playing with it under the blazing sun. So little was known of diamonds in those days that O'Reilly had to wander round for a long time before he could find anyone scientific enough to certify as to the nature of his find.

If this news created interest, what must

ENDLESS HAULAGE, KIMBERLEY DIAMOND-MINE.

have been the wild excitement when, not long after, another trader, named Van Niekerk, brought down and sold in Cape Town for £10,000 a most magnificent stone of the first water which he had bought from a Hottentot for £400? This diamond was the famous "Star of South Africa," now in the possession of the Countess of Dudley,

THE GREAT HARD ROCK SHAFT-HEAD AT DE BEERS DIAMOND-MINES.

and said to be worth £25,000. These stones, however, were found a considerable distance south of Kimberley, in a district where nothing much has come to light since. It was not till 1870, or three years after John O'Reilly found the little Griqua boy "playing chuck-farthing with the destinies of South Africa," as it has been termed, that the first of the great mines was discovered in the neighbourhood where Kimberley now stands.

The rush to the Arctic horrors of the Klondyke at the magic cry of gold is so fresh in one's recollections that it is not difficult to imagine what followed. Men will sell their souls for gold, but even nugget-hunting is tame to the excitement of feeling, when sorting through ground, that at any moment you may come across a large fortune in one pebble. So up the

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fortune-hunters came — in ox-wagons, in mule-carts, on horses, and on foot, people of every nation under the sun—men, women, and even children braving the terrors of the long six weeks' trek over the sun-baked, waterless Karoo in the mad struggle for that will-o'-th'-wisp wealth. A town of tents and galvanised iron shanties was quickly formed, which looked then—as, for that matter, it does to-day—as if it had been shaken down out of a pepper-pot among the heaps of mine *débris*.

Everyone turned digger, and the quantities of stuff taken out of the ground were so colossal that the holes thus formed grew to extraordinary proportions. Indeed, they now constitute one of the seven wonders of the modern world. Their size is positively awe-inspiring. Some idea of their vastness may be conveyed to the reader when it is mentioned that all the Pyramids of Egypt and the cathedrals of Europe could be placed in any one of them. Yet the topmost pinnacle would scarcely come level with the surface, for they are over 500 feet deep. Their sides are perfect precipices, and, though working in these great holes has been discontinued for years, you may even now be startled by the avalanches which come thundering down into their abysses from the sides. The photograph on page 420 shows one of these great holes as they are to be seen to-day, empty and desolate, for all the working now takes place underneath, the great cavity at the top being as nothing in depth to what has been attained below.

In the old days of open working the scene the mines presented was most extraordinary, as will be seen on reference to our illustration on page 421. This vast amphitheatre of between thirty and forty acres was spread over with a network of thousands of wires like a gigantic spider's web. Every claim-owner had a wire, and the number of them was consequently so great as almost to darken the work below. Here the natives swarmed like ants over the ground in the work of extracting the ore, which was hauled to the surface in buckets running on the wires by horse-whins.

All this is changed now. All the wires, all the stirring life have vanished. In place of the picturesque, happy-go-lucky diggers, with their wives and children sorting through gravel under huge sunshades, there is the one great corporation, the De Beers Consolidated Mines, owning all the mines, and turning out diamonds with no more excitement or enthusiasm over the process than if its products were coal or candles. They are the mighty masters who own everything, by the light of whose countenance the town of Kimberley, in a sobered, bereaved way—for its life has gone with the diggers—continues to exist.

"How was it," I once asked one of these old-time miners, "that you all parted with your claims and let Cecil Rhodes buy you out, when you might have gone on getting out diamonds for yourselves?"

"Ah! Rhodes is a great man and a cute man," he replied, "but even he could not have got all the mines into one control if other causes had not come to his assistance. It was like this, you see. At first it was delightful—we dug away and got out our diamonds without any trouble. But after a time, when claims got deeper, water began to come in; then the waste rock from the sides commenced to fall and smothered out our claims faster than we could clear them. So it gradually became evident that we had got beyond our depth in more senses than one. Only a big company with millions to spend in starting afresh to mine underneath the open workings could ever hope to do any good. So we had to give in. Then, again, we had no means of stopping the thefts by our Kaffirs, and we undersold each other with what stones we did get. Ah, yes! I suppose it was bound to come, but many of us lost our all," he sadly concluded.

To visit the mines now, a permit has to be obtained from the all-powerful De Beers Company before you can enter their sacred precincts. Once inside, however, it is really wonderful how you are allowed to roam about unattended, as if nothing more valuable than paving-stones were being got out of the earth. The "Hard Rock Shaft," a photograph of which is on page 423, whose lofty, Eiffel Tower-like spire is such a prominent feature of Kimberley, is about the first object the visitor notes on entering. It will be remembered that it was used by the garrison for searchlight communications with the relieving force. Here, night and day, at the speed of express trains, the trucks come whizzing up from the various levels, 1,000 to 1,500 feet below, and empty themselves into an ore-bin, which automatically reloads other trucks.

Then comes a wonderful automatic triumph. The trucks pass under an endless, ever-running wire rope (see page 423) and instantly, as if moved by a spirit hand, start off on a long journey to the "floors," where the ore is deposited. The "floors," it should be ex-

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INTERIOR OF BATTERY, CROWN REEF GOLD-MINING COMPANY, JOHANNESBURG.

plained, are just large, fenced-in spaces where the hard ore is allowed to lie in order to get soft.

When the diamond-fields were first discovered, this hardness of the ore was one of the principal troubles. No one knew how to treat it satisfactorily. To crush the stuff was to run the risk of also crushing to atoms some splendid large diamond, while to pass huge lumps would be to miss unnumbered finds. There was an old Boer, however, who was noticed never to have any trouble. What did he do? He was carefully watched, to discover his wonderful secret for making the ore soft. But no one could find out what he did to it. And no wonder; for he did—nothing. He just kept it by him and left all to Nature. The rain and the sun and the air played upon it, and behold, his hard rock crumbled into soft mud and gravel! That is the system of treatment followed to this day. Over miles of ground the ore is spread and allowed to lie for about six months before it is taken up for further treatment.

To cover these miles there is a perfect network of railways within the mine grounds. Of the "light" order, it is true, but with real engines and cars running on them. Some of the engines are very tiny—not much larger, indeed, than a good big dog, and consequently not always strong enough for the work in hand. This was proved to me on one occasion in rather an amusing way. I hailed one of these passing trains, which pulled up, and I got on board. Excepting for a long comet's tail of trucks behind us, the driver and I had it all to ourselves. After a time we came to a high bank. The engine panted and strained till one feared it would have apoplexy. We got red in the face in sympathy with the poor thing, but all to no purpose. We began to stop. "Oi reckon we maun git aht and give her a shoov," said the Cornish driver. One has so often heard sarcastically irate passen-

CYANIDE PROCESS GOLD EXTRACTION VATS, NEW PRIMROSE GOLD-MINING COMPANY, JOHANNESBURG.

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DIAMOND SORTING.

gers on delayed trains at Bank Holiday times in England call out to guards asking if they should get out and push, that it struck me as irresistibly comical actually to do it. But though we "shoved" with all our might—the Cornishman, myself, and the engine—our united efforts were unavailing. It was not till we had executed an elaborate scheme of parting with half our trucks, taking the other half over our *Pons Asinorum*, shunting them into a siding, and then returning for those left behind, that we were able to continue our journey out to where the gigantic washing machines were at work separating the *débris* from the pebbles.

For, it is hardly necessary to point out, there is a good deal else besides diamonds that comes out of the mines. In fact, if one diamond is in a barrowful of ore, the Company feels that its average is well kept up. Consequently, to get rid of the *débris* in a cheap and satisfactory way is of the highest importance. The method by which this is achieved at Kimberley is as simple as it is clever. If you were to pour into a wash-basin a steady stream of mud, gravel, and water, while at the same time you kept on stirring the mixture round and round, it is obvious that the mud and water would overflow, and only the pebbles, being heavier, would be left. This is exactly the principle of the diamond-washing machines, one of which gigantic erections is shown in the photograph on page 428. Having once got the pebbles alone, of course it is simple enough to sort them through for the diamonds.

This is the really fascinating part of the whole business. Up to this point you may have wandered round this Arabian Night's treasure-field and yet never seen a sign of a gem. But at the sorting tables it is quite exciting. Sweep goes the gravel in front of the operator, and while you are thinking: "I wonder if that's a diamond," his lightning eye and unerring hand have spotted it and dropped it into a salt-cellar. You realise that if "all that glitters is not gold," many stones that do not glitter may be diamonds. Numbers of queer-looking, discoloured pebbles, that you would have passed, are seized by the experienced operator, who knows that diamonds, like men, cannot always be judged by a rough exterior.

The pebbles are again re-sorted by gangs of Kaffirs. These are under the supervision of lynx-eyed overseers, as the Kaffir, "for ways that are dark and for tricks that are vain," is almost as peculiar as the Heathen Chinee. The mining native is a simple-minded beggar, but withal possessing a considerable faculty of taking care of number one. He was not long in discovering the value of these shiny stones, and was a willing co-operator in the wicked white's wily ways of getting them. "Me steal fine diamond, me get p'raps hundred pounds. Hundred pounds buy me eight, p'raps dozen wives. Dozen wives, good bizness. They till mealie patch, me smoke pipe all day, me look on. Me no more work." Here was a philosophy and a vista of the perfect life for the black man, and all to be had for the concealing of a diamond or two. But, like so many other things good in moderation, the Kaffir over-did the business. The claim-owners kicked when they found that he secretly sold for himself far more diamonds than he found for them.

It was this more than anything else which paved the way for the system introduced by the De Beers Company of making all the natives in their employ live as prisoners in compounds. Here, though deprived of some of the wild joys of dishonesty, the native

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does not have a bad time of it on the whole. If a prisoner, he is a well-paid one. He gets about £4 a month and his "skoff," as he calls his mealie-meal porridge, with the right of buying everything in the compound stores at almost cost price. Wood and water are given to him free, and the hospital is always open to him in case of accident or sickness. There is no Mrs. Grundy to dictate how much or how little clothing he shall wear.

The Company, as will be gathered, are unsympathetic towards his aspirations to the life of earthly bliss we have described. Even the darky's laudable desire to communicate with his "brothers" outside the compound is checked. This used to take the form of throwing over the wall tins of condensed milk, in which diamonds had been placed as keepsakes, but it was stopped by his unfeeling masters placing netting overhead. If the native goes to the trouble and inconvenience of making holes in his own flesh with a penknife and planting diamonds therein "to see if they will grow," his masters will not even let him have them as the reward which should be due to experiment. But at the same time they are careful of his well-being: for a week before he leaves he is generously dosed with medicines to prevent him getting indigestion from any gems he may have swallowed.

Still, with all their efforts, the Company do not have things all their own way. The pastime of I.D.B. (illicit diamond buying) still goes merrily on—this notwithstanding that the forfeits in the game are usually "seven years' hard" on the breakwater at Cape Town to anyone unlucky enough to be caught in possession of an uncut diamond without the written permission of the Kimberley police. It is believed that nearly one-fourth of the total output is thus misappropriated. Certainly, if you go to the diamond-room at the De Beers offices in Kimberley, the finest stones they show you are those stolen by their own *employés*. These are actually bought back by them through secret channels. This is done in order to prevent the diamonds getting on to the European market, which would effectually ruin the Company's power of keeping up prices.

The diamond-room at the De Beers offices is quite small, yet it easily holds all the products of the vast mines, with their intricate

ORE SORTING ROOM, NEW PRIMROSE GOLD-MINE, JOHANNESBURG.

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machinery and thousands of workers. Indeed, you can hardly help laughing at the ludicrousness of the contrast between the mountains outside and the molehills within. "Diamonds, indeed! Why, surely those little heaps on white pieces of paper are samples of soda or sugar — anything you like, but not diamonds!" Yes, it is hard to realise that those rough, dull pebbles will one day add lustre to beauty's crown at stately dance or royal reception; that all fashionable womanhood to the farthest limits of the earth is hungering for the possession of those bits of pebbles in this out-of-the-way spot.

The gold-mining district of Johannesburg is in many ways quite as astonishing as the place whence the world's diamonds emanate.

No one who has travelled there by that long train journey of over a thousand miles from Cape Town, through the desolate red Karoo and the interminable prairie stretches of empty grass veldt in the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal, can ever forget his first sight of the great Main Reef. During the long journey it almost seems at times as if leave had been taken of the world altogether and a change made to a desolate planet. Then this scene of almost unparalleled human activity bursts upon you. Far as the eye can see on either hand, shaft-head, mill, and towering chimney succeed each other in an almost unbroken line. Where once cannon thundered and rifles rattled their death-dealing notes, the old, sonorous sound of the mills has resumed its sway. Pervading all, like the voice of the ocean, they call to one another as deep calleth to deep. Here, day and night for ever, the mighty stamps, silent and rusting so long, are once again singing their hymn of work as they unceasingly pound up the gold-bearing ore.

All the way, as the train turns to the left at Elandsfontein Junction and heads for Johannesburg, the same roar and the same scenes greet ear and eye. Of Johannesburg, which lives by this golden Diana, that wonderful mushroom city which sprang up at the cry of "GOLD," it is not necessary for me to speak here. Its marvellous sky-scraping buildings, its telephones, its electric lights, its activity, its wealth, and all the other marks of its astonishing civilisation, have been described so often. To the thoughtful man, however, interest centres in the mines, the cause, rather than in Johannesburg, the effect.

And the mines are indeed wonderful. When the reef was first discovered and proclaimed as a gold-field in 1886, even the most sanguine of all the thousands of prospectors and others who madly rushed to peg out claims little dreamed of what really vast resources of gold lay beneath his feet. The ore was not rich. Indeed, one might almost say that the distinguishing feature of the Johannesburg mines was the poorness of the gold-bearing rock. It was the astonishing quantity of the stuff and its even quality throughout which made it such a unique mining field. The great reef ran like a road in a practically unbroken line for thirty miles, with companies at work on it all the way. All that was necessary for them to do

A DIAMOND ORE WASHING MACHINE.

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GENERAL VIEW OF THE GOLD MINES ON THE MAIN REEF, JOHANNESBURG.

was to put down machinery on a large enough scale to handle the ore in vast quantities. There was then a sure and certain profit on every ton which came out.

This much was patent to all of us. What none of us, however, realised for years was that these companies' vaunted shafts of a few hundred feet deep were mere scratches on the surface, so to speak; that long before they reached a depth at which mining would be an impossibility, they would have come to the limits of the very narrow strips of ground they had, with foolish lack of foresight, taken up for themselves. For the reefs, it must be understood, did not go vertically straight into the ground, but slanted down in a southerly direction at an angle of from forty to seventy degrees, growing more horizontal the deeper they went.

Oh, what a chance was there for all of us who lived in Johannesburg from 1886 to 1893! The golden ball literally lay at our feet. Every time we crossed the reef to the south we trampled on the fortune which lay beneath. The ground was absolutely unoccupied, and by law was open to any one of us to peg it out for himself. So we should have acquired the rights of mining on the very same reef out of which the surface companies were already turning out millions of pounds' worth of gold bullion. The only difference consisted in the fact that a much deeper shaft would be required to reach the treasure.

Of course, when the bright idea dawned on one man, it hit everyone else at the same time. There was a most extraordinary rush to peg out claims. Men used to wait up with gangs of Kaffirs all night. The pegging had to be done after sunrise, so each Kaffir was armed with a peg which, at the first peep of the sun, he drove into the ground. One man found that the corner of his claim came inside Booysen's Church. He rushed in and drove his peg under the altar!

Now, in addition to the old surface companies extracting gold, there are rows of these deep-level mines, with "deep-deep" mines to the south of them, and even "deeper-deep-deeps" beyond. These extend to more than a mile and a half south of where the original companies are working, and are based on the assumption of striking the reef *at over a mile deep!*

To do this is a gigantic mining proposition. In many cases it actually means that the company which undertakes it will have to outlay in hard cash at least a million pounds, and wait five or even ten years for shaft sinking, before they can even get at the gold. Nothing better illustrates the faith in Johannesburg's mines possessed by its hard-headed financiers and men of business than that such sums should be forthcoming under such conditions.

It used to be an old joke in Johannesburg that there were three degrees of liar—the liar, the adjectival liar, and—the mining expert. But the Rand mining experts, notwithstanding this hint at a vivid imagination

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in the case of the probable output of the mines, have actually, in nearly every instance, fallen far short of the truth. When Mr. Hamilton Smith, the great mining engineer to Messrs. Rothschild, reported on the Rand in 1895—if memory serves me right—he then estimated that about 400,000 ounces of gold per month would be probably the maximum the mines would produce. This amount (392,022 ounces, to be exact) was, however, turned out just before the war. His estimate would now very likely be placed at nearer double that figure. His other masterly, though cautious calculation, made two years previously, of £325,000,000 (three hundred and twenty-five million pounds sterling) of gold *still lying there* capable of being mined at a profit, vast and beyond comprehension as his figures are, has, by the testing of the reef at depths then undreamed of, been virtually proved to be only a third or fourth of the actual store of wealth awaiting realisation.

Mr. John Hays Hammond, the great American mining engineer, has since given £80.,000,000 as his estimate of the gold which can be profitably got out. A still larger and more recent estimate is that given by Messrs. T. H. Leggett and F. H. Hatch, who, besides being well-known Rand mining experts, are members of the Institution of Mining and Metallurgy. These gentlemen stated last October that in their opinion the mines would last forty-two and a half years while producing £30,000,000 per annum. This is equal to a total production of £1,233,560,709. But even this estimate was based on the assumption that mining would be carried on to a vertical depth of 6,000 feet. Ground on the Rand changes hands at high figures where the reef lies at 8,000 feet.

And how is the gold extracted? Let us begin by going down one of the mines, and then follow the process throughout. You enter an empty "skip" at the top of the shaft, which has just done duty in bringing up a truck-load of ore. Suddenly the great cage sinks under you—the bottom of the world has dropped out. You are falling through black darkness to perdition. Then, just as suddenly, comes a stop. "Step here," says a voice through the blackness. But you are too frightened to step anywhere. The impression is firm within you that if you venture out of the skip, you will fall into the bottomless pit. Indeed, you are not quite sure that the invitation is not from Mephistopheles himself.

However, Mephistopheles lights a candle, and you discover him to be a very ordinary-looking English miner, with a pleasant face. Courage returns, and you willingly follow your guide with bended head through narrow, scalp-scraping tunnels. Tiny tram-lines run under your feet, and every now and then you have to stand on one side to make way for yelling gangs of naked Zulus pushing trucks of ore along. Arrived at the end, you find more natives holding yard-long steel drills, which their brethren are driving into the hard rock with hammers. Into the holes thus made dynamite cartridges will ere long be placed. When the ore is blasted out, and the dynamite's deadly fumes have cleared, the miners will return, and the trucks be loaded and swung to the top of the shaft-head.

At this dizzy height they automatically capsize into a great ore-bin, which in a similar way loads other trucks. These run into the ore-sorting room, where the barren rock is thrown out. The good ore is fed through an opening in the floor into the great stamping mill, or "battery," beneath.

A battery is nothing else but a pestle and mortar on a large scale. Imagine a series of these mortar-boxes, in every one of which five titanic pestles, each weighing 1,000 lb., are ceaselessly rising and falling, and you at once have in your mind's eye a clear picture of a stamping mill. On one side of the stamp-boxes there is a fine sieve, through which the crushed ore, looking like gruel, is carried by water. This flows down the long, sloping plates which will be noticed in the photograph. These plates are of copper, coated with mercury. Mercury, as every-one knows, shares with many human beings the peculiarity of sticking to any gold with which it comes in contact. Once a month the plates are scraped for their precious accumulations. The "amalgam" so obtained is put into a retort, and the mercury vaporised by heat. The gold is thus left ready for smelting up into solid bars.

Unfortunately, however, much of the gold, especially in the deeper mines, is associated with iron pyrites and other metals for which mercury has no affinity. Consequently, after leaving the batteries, the ore tailings have to be subjected to what is known as the "cyanide process." This is the nearest imitation to brewing one could wish to see. The powdered ore goes into colossal vats, where it is soaked in a very weak solution of cyanide of potassium. The gold slowly dissolves into the liquid, which is run off into smaller vessels containing zinc shavings. These cause the precious metal to precipitate itself into black powder that readily smelts into fine gold.

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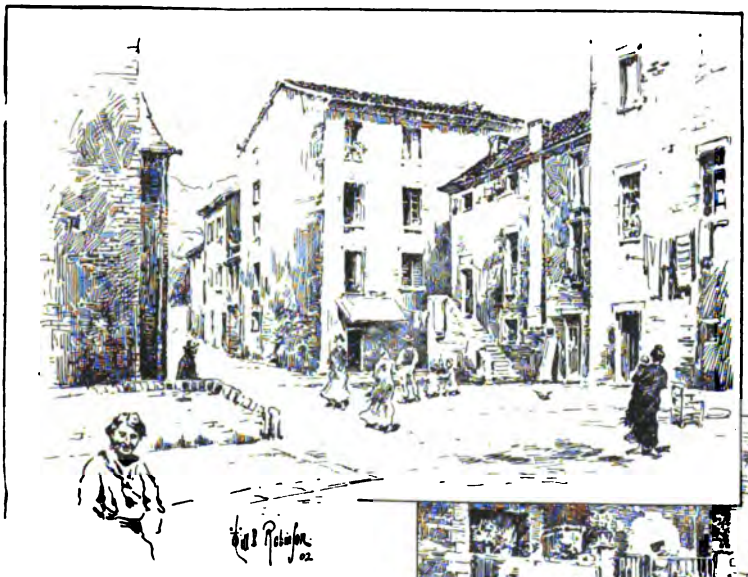
THE BIRTHPLACE OF COLUMBUS.

By MILLER CHRISTY.*

OF the great men who were born in the early centuries, when the formal registration of births and the art of printing were alike unknown, not a few are able (if the claims of posterity may be trusted) to boast an extraordinarily large number of birthplaces. For Posterity, either through gratitude or vanity, seeks always to appropriate a share of the glory reflected down the Ages by the doings of some great man who has written his name in bold characters on the pages of the world's history.



THE PIAZZA BAPTISTA AGNESI, COGOLETO.

Of no man is this more true than of him who achieved (albeit entirely by accident) what has been styled the greatest event in the history of our globe—the discovery of the New World. A living writer of high authority has declared that no fewer than ten towns and villages on the Italian Riviera claim to be the true birthplace of Columbus. Nevertheless, few who sift finely the arguments advanced by the different claimants can arrive at any other conclusion than that, if Columbus had really (like any ordinary mortal) only one birthplace, the honour of having given him birth belongs unquestionably either to the city of Genoa or to the little neighbouring town of Cogoleto. Years ago, the weight of learned opinion was decidedly in favour of Cogoleto, but nowadays the claims of Genoa are more approved. Good authorities, however, still beg to differ, and it is likely that the point at issue will never be settled definitely, owing to lack of conclusive evidence.

THE SEA-FRONT OF THE COLUMBUS HOUSE.

It is true that, in one place, Columbus himself speaks of having been born in Genoa; but even this proves little. Supposing that he was really born in Cogoleto, or in any of the other small Ligurian towns which claim him as a native, nothing would be more natural than that, when

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resident on foreign soil, he should consider himself and declare himself a Genoese, thus claiming as the place of his birth the city under whose shadow he was born, in which he had certainly many near relatives and close friends, and with which he was unquestionably as familiar as any native. "Genoa the Superb" (as she proudly called herself) must have been, in any case, from his earliest youth, his ideal city. In the days of his boyhood, her enterprise was at its height, and his young imagination must have been stirred by stories of the naval and commercial successes of her citizens and the prowess of her sailors. What, therefore, would be more natural than that Spanish and Portuguese princes and historians should persistently associate Columbus with the city of Genoa, even if he did explain that he was born, in reality, not actually in the city itself, but in a little town a few miles distant, though within the boundaries of the Republic?

THE STREET-FRONT OF THE COLUMBUS HOUSE.

We must bear in mind that, even if Columbus was born really in Cogoleto, his name would become associated naturally with Genoa, whose overwhelmingly greater fame would certainly enable her, in after years, when the question came to be discussed ardently, to establish her claim by might (so to speak), if she could not do so by unquestionable right. But, if Columbus was really born in the city of Genoa, there is no conceivable reason why his name should have become associated with the comparatively insignificant village of Cogoleto. And, as what follows will show, the claim of Cogoleto is, to say the least, very plausible.

The earliest historian who names Cogoleto as the birthplace of Columbus appears to be Ovideo, whose "Historia General de las Indias" was published in 1530, less than thirty years after the admiral's death. Since his day, many other writers have supported the claims of Cogoleto. Chief among these was Signor Felice Isnardi, who discussed the question in a pamphlet published some years ago. In any case, it is certain that Columbus was familiar with the little town; for he must have passed through it many a time when travelling along the ancient coast-road between Genoa and Savona, at both of which places his father had business establishments.

Facts and arguments innumerable have been brought forward to establish the claim of Genoa, but the Cogoletese (or *Cogoletani*, as they call themselves), like Gallio, care for none of these things. They assert, and claim to prove, that in Cogoleto, and nowhere else, the famous mariner was born. And, whether they are right or wrong, it is certain that their otherwise unimportant, if not unattractive, little town literally teems with interest for the hero-worshipper in whose Valhalla Columbus finds a place. None such will regard as wasted time an hour or two spent in a pilgrimage to this reputed birthplace of the great discoverer.

Lying right upon the shore of the tideless Mediterranean, in the territory of ancient Liguria, some eleven English miles east from Savona, and fifteen west from Genoa, and shut in at the back by the coast-ranges of the Ligurian Apennines, Cogoleto is a sleepy little seaport town of about 2,500 inhabitants, with narrow streets and dingy but picturesque houses. Though situated upon a main travel-route, the town is not very easy of access. It is not of sufficient importance for the faster express trains—the *accelerati*,

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by which tourists generally travel—to stop there. To reach it, one is obliged to take one of the slow "omnibus" trains, which stop at every station. Still, these latter enable the pilgrim to reach his destination in good time, from either Savona or Genoa, to see the sights of the place, and return to his starting-point, or to proceed to the other city, all within the day. Sleeping at Cogoleto cannot be recommended. There is but one tiny inn, or *trattoria*, named (like most other things in the town) after Columbus. I slept there on one of my visits, and found it clean enough; but the *ménage* is of primitive simplicity, for the landlord combines within himself the multifarious offices of cook, chambermaid, boots, and waiter. Still, prices are proportionately modest, for dinner, bed, and breakfast cost only four lire (three shillings)! The visitors' book,

THE STATUE TO COLUMBUS, AT COGOLETO.

which all guests in an Italian hotel are compelled to sign, shows that no other foreign tourist has passed a night at Cogoleto's one hotel within historic times.

The tourist, starting from Savona, reaches his destination by the "omnibus" train in about forty minutes. The slow rate of travel is well compensated, for the scenery is

CONTEMPORARY PORTRAIT OF COLUMBUS PRESERVED AT COGOLETO.

charming and the line shows marvels of engineering skill. At few places is there more than just enough room between the rocky cliffs and the sea to allow of the passage of the road and the railway, while the embankment of the latter is washed in places by the blue waters of the Mediterranean, and nearly every one of the many small headlands on the coast has had to be pierced, thus making the whole line little more than a series of many short tunnels. As the train nears Cogoleto, the traveller sees, almost for the first time, the mountains receding from the coast and leaving a stretch of fertile cultivable land, a mile or so in width, at the back of the little town.

The obvious antiquity of the place (anciently known as Cugoreo or Cogoreto) will strike every visitor. Its dark narrow street speaks of the past alone; and, were we concerned with its history, we should be carried back to very early times, when Hannibal with his Carthaginian hordes, on his way to humble the Roman Eagle, passed along its ancient roadway, which dates from pre-Christian days. Interesting stories are told of the old castle or fortress of Borgo di Cogoleto; but, to the visitor in search of Columbus lore, its chief interest lies in the

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fact that it is said to have been granted, in the year 1200, to the then head of the great navigator's family as a reward for a victory gained by him. Many have questioned the truth of this story, but the Cogoletani admit no doubt of it and have erected a tablet in their church to confirm it.

In years long gone by, Tennyson visited Cogoleto and recognised its claim. He has left us a brief sketch of it and of his visit, in "The Daisy," in which he tells—

> How young Columbus seemed to rove,
> Yet present in his natal grove;
> Now watching high on mountain cornice,
> And steering now from a purple cove.
>
> Now pacing mute by ocean's rim;
> Till, in a narrow street and dim,
> I stay'd the wheels at Cogoleto
> And drank, and loyally drank, to him.
>
> Nor know we well what pleased us most;
> Not the clipt palm of which they boast,
> But distant colour. Happy hamlet,
> A moulder'd citadel on the coast!

To-day, Cogoleto consists of little more than two narrow streets, one of which skirts the seashore and is connected with the second, immediately behind it, by two small *piazzas* or squares. Its inhabitants, like those of most small Italian towns, are not blest with an abundance of worldly wealth. Yet the Cogoletani are by no means devoid of enterprise, for they have provided themselves with an excellent water-supply and their streets are lit by electric light, the power for which is obtained from waterfalls

THE PIAZZA DEGLI ANSALDO, AT COGOLETO.

upon the mountains at the back. Close to the station is the boot-factory of Messrs. Biamonti and Co. Cogoleto also devotes her labour-power to the making of soap, dye, lime, and shot; and she contributes an unusually large proportion of her sons to man the vessels of the Italian Navy. In the matter of public institutions, Cogoleto

GENERAL VIEW OF COGOLETO, FROM THE BACK.

is, for an Italian town, fairly well provided. It has a small hospital, almshouses, two communal schools, and an orphanage dedicated to the memory of Columbus.

On leaving the station, the visitor should take the narrow road leading to the sea-front. A couple of hundred yards brings him to the Piazza Baptista Agnesi, one of the two squares already mentioned. I give a view of it, taken from the sea-front. The house with an awning in the background is the "Trattoria del Christoforo Colombo," already spoken of. Turning sharply to the left, one enters the Via Christoforo Colombo (that is, "Christopher Columbus Street"). It is extremely narrow and roughly paved, but is, nevertheless, Cogoleto's principal thoroughfare. A few paces bring one to No. 22, and here, in this plain, solidly built, two-storey, stone house there took place, at some unknown date in the year 1446 or early in 1447, the event which was to prove a time-mark in the world's history—at least, so say the Cogoletani.

To-day the ground floor of the Columbus house is used as a tobacconist's shop. The present occupants of the house are kindly disposed towards visitors and are always pleased to show it for a small consideration. Perhaps, even, they may present the pilgrim (as in my case) with a memento in the shape of a flower grown upon the balcony at the back, overlooking

the sea, upon which in his youth Columbus may have sat, pondering upon his scheme "to reach the East by sailing West." The present occupants are, however, not linguists; and if the pilgrim does not command Italian, his reveries will not be disturbed by the commonplaces of the showman. The front of the house is adorned by inscriptions and designs commemorating its history. It is difficult to obtain a better view of it than that on page 432, owing to the narrowness of the street.

On the front of the ground floor are two inscriptions in Latin, with the date (1826) when they were put up. Rendered into English their legend would be:—

Traveller, stay thy steps. Here Columbus, one of the world's greatest men, first saw light. Alas! a much too modest birthplace!

One world there was. Two there are, said he. There were!

Under what special circumstances or by whom these inscriptions were put up does not appear; but the cause of erection of other legends on the front of the ground floor is obvious. One, on a marble tablet erected by the Town Council in 1888, commemorates the fact that, on September 2nd 1857, King Humbert, with his brother Amadeo, Prince of Savoy, visited the house. Another records that the house was repaired on the 28th of August 1872. A third tablet, also erected by the municipal body, relates that in 1880 the Crown Prince of Germany, afterwards the Kaiser Frederick, came to Cogoleto from San Remo and inspected the house. There are also the armorial bearings of Columbus.

On the front of the first storey is a portrait of Columbus, with a eulogium upon him, put there two centuries and a half ago by Father Antonio Colombo, who is said to have been the last member of the family to reside in the town. Though now too much effaced to be legible easily, it read originally as follows:—

Con generoso ardir dall' Arca all' onde
Ubbidiente il vol Colomba prende,
Corre, s'aggira, terren scopre, e fronde
D'olivo in segno, al gran Noe ne rende.

L'imita in cio COLOMBO, ne s'asconde,
E da sua Patria il mar solcando fende;
Terreno alfin scoprendo diede fondo,
Offerendo all' Ispano un nuovo Mondo.

Li 2 Dicembre 1650.

Prete *Antonio Colombo.**

On the front of the second storey is a painted representation of a globe within an ornamental scroll.

Having exhausted the interest of the front of the Columbus house, the visitor should proceed a hundred yards or so further along the "narrow street and dim." This will bring him to the second and larger of the two squares, the Piazza Degli Ansaldo, of which a view, taken from the seashore, is given. In the centre is a small fountain. On the eastern side, against the wall of the *Casa Communale*, or Town Hall, is a monument, erected by the town to the memory of the man whom every Cogoletan claims as a fellow-citizen. The bust which crowns the monument is the work of Domenico Vassalo, of Genoa, who presented it to the town in 1864, on condition that it should be erected on a worthy pedestal in a public place, but the monument was not unveiled till March 1889. The pedestal of Baveno granite was largely subscribed for by a colony of natives of Cogoleto resident in Buenos Ayres. On the front is the simple dedication: "A Cristoforo Colombo, Cogoleto." On the sides are other inscriptions, which refer to the fame and achievements of Cogoleto's hero. The shaft which supports the bust bears on the front, within a wreath, the historic date, "11 Ottobre 1492," the day on which the New World was discovered. The monument is artistic and not unworthy to commemorate Columbus.

The *Casa Communale* is the next point of interest. A plain, commonplace, stone building, of no great pretension, it contains, nevertheless, treasures which are intimately connected with the life and work of the great navigator, and bring the associations of the place more closely home to the mind of the visitor than even the house of his birth. In the tiny chamber which serves as a municipal art gallery and museum, as well as the mayor's private office, visitors are always courteously received by the civic officials, who exhibit with pardonable pride the relics in their charge. By far the most interesting is the contemporary portrait of the navigator—one of the two genuinely ancient ones now known to exist—which has remained in the possession of the autho-

* With noble courage, from the Ark, the Dove,
Obedient, takes her flight across the Deep.
She hastens, wanders round, discovers land,
And, for a token, bears to Noah an olive twig.

In this, Columbus imitates her. He flees away,
And, leaving his country, ploughs the main.
At last, discovering land, he anchors,
Thus giving unto Spain a New World.

December 2nd, 1650.

Father *Antonio Columbus.*

The play upon the words *Colomba* (the Dove) and *Colombo* (the discoverer) should be noted; also the very neatly expressed idea underlying it.

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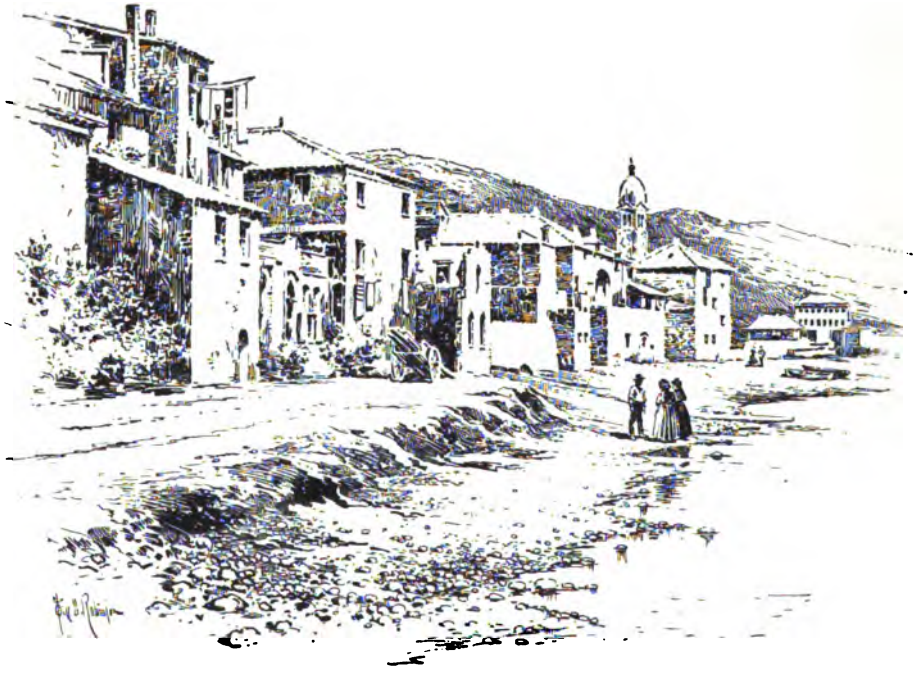
rities of the town, it is said, for over three hundred years. Somewhat tattered and the worse for age, it is guarded with the utmost care, as becomes a treasure beyond all price. The portrait measures about three feet in height by two in width, and represents, with but few points of dissimilarity, the same thoughtful, almost monastic, face, with which everyone has become familiar through the many reproductions of the better known portrait now at Como. At the top are the words: *CHRISTOPHORVS COLVMBVS NOVI ORBIS REPERITVR* (Christopher Columbus, Discoverer of the New World). Here, too, may be seen copies of ancient documents connected with the family of Columbus. There is an authenticated copy, made in the year 1586, of the will (now lost) of Domenico Colombo, made in Cogoleto in 1449, wherein he names as his heirs his three sons, Christoforo, Bartolomeo, and Giacomo; also a power of attorney procured on September 5th, 1482, by Bartolomeo Colombo through a notary at the neighbouring town of Varraze, empowering him to act for his brother Christoforo, who had left for Spain. These documents, with others upon which Cogoleto partly founds her claims, were brought to light by the researches of Signor Felice Isnardi, to whose memory a tablet has been gratefully erected; while, in recognition of the gift of Vassalo, the sculptor, a framed portrait of him is included also in the collection. All visitors are invited to sign their names in a book kept for that purpose. The entries show clearly how few now perform the pilgrimage to Cogoleto; for the same small book has served for nearly a century, and seems likely at the present rate to last another. Years ago, American visitors came occasionally, and now and then an Englishman; but for the last quarter of a century, though a few Frenchmen and Italians have entered their names, no one of either English or American nationality has done so except myself.



THE SEA-FRONT AT COGOLETO.

A hundred yards or so further along the Via Christoforo Colombo is the parish church, built on the site occupied by an earlier church, attached to which was, it is said, a chapel erected in the year 1500 by Antonio and Bartolomeo, brothers of Columbus. Modern and outwardly plain, the present church is internally as gorgeously ornate as most Italian churches, and is dedicated to Sta. Maria Maggiore, the Holy Virgin, after whom Columbus named the vessel in which he made his first voyage.

Returning to the other end of the town by the road along the sea front which is here shown, the visitor will find more tablets to interest him—indeed, the commemorative

instinct seems to be developed quite abnormally in the Cogoletani.

On the wall of a communal school, facing the sea, there is a tablet which commemorates the heroism of Massena, who, in 1800, bravely held Genoa for three months, though beset by an Austrian army and blockaded by an English fleet. For a time, indeed, he actually established his head-quarters at Cogoleto.

Passing on, the Columbus house is again reached. This time it is the back, looking out over the sea, which of the two views is certainly by far the prettier, including as it does the balcony, or *loggia*, already alluded to, and shown in the drawing on page 431. Here another tablet on the wall records that, in 1847, the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of Columbus, and on the 11th of October, the anniversary of the day on which the New World was discovered, came Captain R. Engle, with the officers and crew of the United States warship "Princetown," "*A salutare la Patria del Grande Navigatore*" (to salute the birthplace of the Great Navigator).

This exhausts the list of objects of interest in connection with Columbus now to be seen at Cogoleto. Of the little town as a whole, and of its vicinity, the visitor may obtain a good idea by strolling back past the railway-station to a good look-out point just above a large quarry in the hillside, whence no doubt came much of the stone of which the town is built. Just below is the station, with the town and the church beyond, as shown on page 434. Eastward, along the coast, is seen the tall lighthouse over the harbour mouth at Genoa. In the opposite direction—that is, westward—may be seen the entrance to the harbour of Savona.

If the pilgrim is proceeding towards Genoa, he will there find much more to interest him in connection with Columbus. The house forming No. 37 in the Vico Dritto di Pontichello stands on the site of that in which (according to the Genoese) Columbus was born. But of Genoa many have written.

In connection with the life-history of Columbus it may be noted as strange that the place of his final sepulture is now almost as doubtful as the place of his birth; for the remains, or supposed remains, of the great discoverer have been disinterred and removed elsewhere for re-burial so often that their present resting-place has become uncertain.

It only remains to say that, if any visitor to Cogoleto or Genoa can find convincing and irrefutable proofs that either was the sole and only birthplace of the discoverer of the New World, mankind will hail him as a second Columbus and will award him an honoured niche in the Temple of Fame. Even should a decision be given ultimately in favour of Genoa, and against the claims of Cogoleto, still no one interested in Columbus need ever regret the hours spent in a pilgrimage to this "moulder'd citadel on the coast."

THE VICTORY.

SEE, see!—the blows at his breast,
Abyss at his back,
The peril of dark that pressed,
And doubts in a pack
That hunted to drag him down,
Have triumphed? and now
He's crushed, who climbed for the crown
To the summit's brow?

No! though at the foot he lies,
Fallen and vain,
With gaze to the peak whose skies
He could not attain,
The victory is, with strength—
No matter the past!
He'd dare it again, the dark length,
And the fall at last!

CALE YOUNG RICE.

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UNSOLVED.

By IAN MACLAREN.*

No. III.—AN UNSEEN PRESENCE.

T was agreed among ourselves upon the Moor that the Indian soldier had done his duty the night before in a simple and straightforward manner, and that an obligation lay on the rest of us to follow his lead. There was a dispute in the evening between the writing-man and the barrister which should go first, and so much time was being lost that we called upon the soldier to order either he pleased to the front, and he chose the writing-man because he hoped the professional skill in story-telling would make up for his own poverty of speech the night before. And after we had all protested that nothing could have been better than the soldier's description of his midnight skirmish in the sixteenth century, and after we had insisted that the writing-man was not to dazzle us with the preciosities of literary style, or foist upon our simplicity some elaborately wrought fiction, we lay back in our chairs, and this was the story he told :—

"While I have been a citizen of many places, and have no local roots, I took my degree at Edinburgh, and am proud of that slight connection with the austere capital of Scotland. Last week I travelled over Edinburgh on the top of an electric car to enjoy the glory of Princes Street once more, and to revive certain memories of the past in greyer streets and less fashionable quarters. In the afternoon I found myself in what is called the South Side, a district of which the West End of Edinburgh professes to be ignorant, but where a considerable number of well-doing citizens live and bring up their families, and which is much frequented by students. I did not notice where we were till suddenly, at a stoppage of the car, I looked up and saw above me the top floor of a four-storey building, and a corner room with a window on the main street and one on a narrow lane at the side. At the sight of that commonplace room I started from my seat and left the car as by a sudden masterful attraction. It was not simply that in the days of long ago a student had lived and worked and had good fellowship in that room, for he had other lodgings in Edinburgh which he would not have looked at twice, and some of which he had forgotten. It was because the sight of that room, even from the roof of a tram-car, brought up before him the most inexplicable experience of his life, and the most gruesome.

"It came upon me that I should like, so far as might be, to renew the impression of more than thirty years ago, and I went up the lane and stood at the door which gives access to the flats above. I rang the upper bell, and noted from the brass plate that a maiden lady was now the tenant of the house—Miss Jane McKittrick. The door was opened from above by an ingenious arrangement which I used to admire because it secured the privacy of the stair, and saved the servants from the inconvenience of coming down with the call of every visitor. I mounted the familiar steps, and remembered how in a panic of my heart I had thought of bolting down them once in the early morning of a winter day, that I might escape from I knew not what, but, at any rate, save myself soul and body from an awful and hostile presence. When a trim and demure servant—the handmaid of an elderly, highly respected unmarried lady—met me at the top of the stair, and seemed, so far as her face expressed anything, to ask what such a person as I appeared to be could want with her mistress, I came to myself and faced an embarrassing situation. Was I to ask whether Miss McKittrick was at home, and would be good enough to see an unknown and somewhat Bohemian-looking visitor, and then, when I had got Miss McKittrick calmed after the excitement of a stranger's invasion, and settled down in *the* room, was I to tell her how I used to toil long hours in that room, to say nothing of many a smoking conference with

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men—some of whom are famous now, some of whom are dead—and what befell me one night when none of those men was with me? If I did, and my speech came within a thousand miles of the reality, then Miss McKittrick would certainly faint, and the demure maidservant, when I brought her in haste, would shriek, people would come up from the flat below, and the police would arrive later, and I could not imagine what crime I might not be charged with. Certainly there would be a scandal and a paragragh in the evening papers, Miss McKittrick would leave her irreproachable little house that afternoon, and I, who had none of my own, would be a breaker up of homes, and very likely be prosecuted by the landlord for malicious injury of his property. Which sobering vision passed like a flash before my eyes, while I seemed to be looking into the face of Miss McKittrick's carefully trained and highly proper handmaiden, and she on her part was questioning me by her countenance whether I had come to sell gas-burners or sewing-machines.

"I came to a hasty resolution to be honest up to a point, and having by good luck discovered a card in my waistcoat pocket, I asked Elizabeth—for that was what Miss McKittrick called her, just as her young man would call her Lizzie—to take it to her mistress with my compliments, and to ask whether of her kindness I might see her for a moment. After a moment's hesitation, and a flattering decision on the part of Elizabeth that I was neither selling nor begging, nor likely to steal ornaments from the table, I was shown into the very room, and stood in an instant on the very spot, where I had fought for my life. After an ancient bedroom, with a Queen Mary's bed and a ghostly cabinet, my room, I fear, will seem a poor thing, for it was only the little drawing-room of a fourth floor flat, and furnished according to the taste of an Edinburgh maiden lady, who collected once a year for the Indigent Gentlewomen's Fund, and held strong views on the principles of a Free Kirk. A highly respectable and prim little room, with a chiffonier full of missionary curiosities, a venerable piano, antimacassars upon the chairs, and for ornaments on the mantelpiece wax flowers and alabaster vases. On the table lay the 'Life' of that eminent Highland divine, the Rev. Dugald MacTavish, a copy of Mrs. Heman's poems, and the report of the District Visitation Society. Upon the face of it, it was a ghost-proof room, so proper and so orthodox that no tricky spirit, wandering to and fro and looking out for a temporary resting-place, was likely to cross the threshold. Nor was it a whit more romantic thirty years before, when it was the sitting-room of a light-hearted and very casual student, who was studying much against his will, and would much rather have been fishing on a Highland burn, or riding on his sheltie along a moorland road. Curious to say, there was a piano then, which aided us to the best of its jingling ability in 'Villikins and his Dinah,' 'When Johnny Comes Marching Home,' 'John Brown's Knapsack was Number 24,' and other high-class student ballads of the period, and there was also a chiffonier in my day, the interior of which was used for keeping tobacco, and the top of which was ornamented with fencing-foils. Mr. MacTavish's 'Life' had not then appeared, and the District Visitation report had somehow been forgotten, so the table was piled with classics which were loved, and mathematical books which were hated, relieved by a volume of Artemus Ward, then in his glory, or Guy Livingstone, whom we thought rather a dashing writer, and the old maid's perjinck settee very different from the sofa on which a student and his friends sprawled at length, and whose holes and corners were stuffed with tobacco ash. But otherwise the same room, and a room which an historical and aristocratic ghost would be ashamed to enter.

"Miss McKittrick was the tidiest and timidest of little single ladies, and at first neither sat down nor invited me to take a seat; but after I'd thrown myself upon her mercy, and pleaded that I was a middle-aged and world-battered man who had bethought himself of his student days, and wished to see the rooms in which he had prepared for his degree, the good soul relapsed her natural reserve and her vague suspicion of unknown male visitors. She felt it was a lad's romance and she forgot her years and mine—there is no kinder soul than a sweet-blooded old maiden lady—and she not only bade me welcome to my old room, but with a nice tact she suggested that I would doubtless like to be alone for a little; so Miss McKittrick went out, closing the door, and left me with the past.

"I took a chair as like the one I used to have as could be found in Miss McKittrick's room, and sat down at the table, and opposite me, nothing between us but mathematical books and sheets of paper, sat my coach on the night before *it* happened. It was all very well, you must know, in those days to

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be a fair scholar in Latin and Greek, and even to have the trick of prose translation from English into Latin; but unless you could pass a certain modest standard in mathematics and natural philosophy, your classics would avail you nothing, and you could not get a degree. As I hated Euclid worse than anything, except trigonometry, and had not the slightest interest either in the laws of light or heat, it was necessary that some practised hand should cram me for the occasion — that is how I came to know McKinnon. It did not matter where I asked, or how I put my case, as soon as men got an inkling of the situation, every one of them said: 'Get Angus McKinnon.' They said that there had not been for twenty years such a mathematician known in the University as this West Highland Celt, and that if he ever got to Cambridge, he would take the Senior Wranglership walking, but that he would never get out of Edinburgh because he couldn't take his degree, never having been able even to translate Cæsar or to distinguish one Greek letter from another; that his power of calculation reduced the mathematical professor to silent admiration; that he was as familiar with the fourth dimension as with the University public-house, which was saying a good deal; that he could teach mathematics to a Highland cattle beast, and that he had passed men through that department of their degree who were barely sane; that he knew almost every question an examiner would ask, and crammed his pupils with answers which they remembered for about seven days and never understood; that his power of drinking was portentous, and that it was doubtful whether he was ever sober; that his temper was satanic, and his profanity an absolute monopoly, but that his genius for passing a fool through mathematics was beyond question. Therefore my friends agreed, with painful unanimity, that if I ever expected to get a degree, I should secure the services of Angus McKinnon. It was in a public-house that I found him about 10 a.m., and it was evident that he had already been 'tasting,' but he was sober enough to demand a heavy fee in advance, and to declare, after half-a-dozen searching questions, that he thought I was on the whole, in the matter of mathematics, the greatest ass he had yet come across. He added, however, that if I were willing, as he put it, to 'mind what I will be telling you, and to be working night and day, and not to be meddling with speerits'—which, he explained, was a temptation avoided by all mathematicians—'he would pass me through, or' (and on reaching this point he brought a gigantic fist down upon the table) 'he would see both himself and me in a part of the universe where the question of degrees would be of little importance.' As I looked upon him for the first time in that classic place—six feet two in height, forty-two inches round the chest, black-haired and black-bearded, with a strong-cut face and gleaming eyes—I could see beneath the drinking, and the recklessness, and the swearing, and the roughness, that there was a strength of iron will and unquenchable manhood in Angus McKinnon.

"Again McKinnon and I were facing one another across the table on which, under his fiery compulsion, I had been forced to drudge for two months as I had never done in all my life; and again McKinnon was showing me methods of solving equations so rapid and ingenious that even I could work them in a few minutes; and finally drilling into my mind the principles of geometry with such force that I remember a very few of them even to this day; and taking me through a hundred questions, out of which he was certain the examiners would ask twenty-five, and impressing upon me with triumphant emphasis that if I only stuck to the twenty-five he had prepared me for, and left severely alone the others he had not anticipated, and which with much frankness he implored me not to attempt lest I should reveal my idiotcy, he was prepared to swear, and did swear at some length, I would pass the mathematics. When I showed any intelligence, he was agreeable to the point of contempt, declaring that if my father had given me any real education when I was young, something could have been made of me; and when I did not follow him in a short cut through a calculation, he was fearsome, both in his looks and language; and when I had not worked for him as he expected, he would lose all control, and sweep the books off the table, and storm like a bull. As I was not a boy, there were times when I was almost roused to rebel against this violence, but I frankly confess that there was a fierceness and a virility about Angus which had, to use the Scots phrase, put the fear of death upon stronger men than I was. Besides, one found that underneath the coarseness there was a heart in the man, and, even though it seems absurd to say it, a certain tenderness. He was honestly concerned about my passing, much more than about his fees, although he had driven

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so hard a bargain It was evident that he would be much pleased if I obtained my degree, although his chance of obtaining one was the remotest; and there was a certain friendliness which disarmed him of half his offence. Frankly, I came to like McKinnon, and perhaps through the insight of this sympathy, I began to speculate about

"Sober enough to demand a heavy fee in advance."

the problem of his life. It was not a thing unheard of that a Celt should 'taste,' but that a man of such trenchant intellect and will-power should play the fool before the eyes of all men, and be the song of the drunkards, demanded some solution. Had there been some tragedy in his life? Was his heart eaten by vain regret? Was he really a broken-hearted and hopeless man killing remembrance by alternate bouts of study and drinking? He never once alluded to himself or to his life, and he was not the man whom anyone could question. One night he lit his pipe and stood upon the hearthrug looking into the fire, while I wrought out a problem he had set me, and glancing to see whether he was growing impatient, I noticed that the fashion of his countenance had altered. The fierceness and the restlessness had given place to an expression of unspeakable sadness, and if ever I saw remorse and despair upon a human face, it was that night. When we resumed work, McKinnon was courteous as only a Celt can be, and as he was on rare occasions when he seemed to come to himself. When he rose to go, I took my courage in both my hands and tried to say what was in my heart. What I did say I really do not know, but he understood. He looked at me for what seemed a whole minute in silence, then he put his hands upon my shoulder. I realised how handsome McKinnon must have been before his face was coarsened—and he said: 'Pray God you may never do in an instant what you will be regretting all the days of your life—when it is too late, too late.' He left the room and let himself out. I had the sense not to follow, but from the window I saw him cross the street. I watched him till he disappeared, and that was the last time I saw McKinnon alive.

"Next day I sat for the mathematical exam., and as soon as I saw the paper was certain that I would pass. No wonder the incapables sang the praises of Angus McKinnon, and declared that the gift of second sight in the matter of examinations was given to that Celt, for seventy-five per cent. of the questions I had already worked over, and with the balance I did not meddle. When I left the examination-hall, my heart was full of gratitude to McKinnon, and I expected to see him at the door, for it was his way to meet his pupils when they came out and to hurry them into some corner, to snatch the paper out of their hands, to run it over in an instant, reviewing the imbecility of the examiners in ever returning upon their own tracks, or acknowledging their genius in setting questions which he had not anticipated,

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and then dragging out from the unfortunate candidate what he had done and how he had done it, and what he had not done and why he had not done it; and then to announce to him with absolute infallibility either his success or his failure. Angus was not in the passage, nor in the quadrangle, nor lurking anywhere beneath the great arches of the entrance, nor in ambush at the gate. And I was inwardly cast down, for I knew that, thanks to him, I had done well, and, I confess it, I had hoped—having heard of such a thing—that he would shake hands with me. I hurried over to the University place of refreshment, into a back room which was a common haunt of McKinnon's. He was not there, nor had he called that morning. I inquired here and there among the men, but no one had seen Angus; and they began to remark upon his absence, for he was a figure on examination days. Once, when Angus had had an international difference with four foreign students, none of whom attended classes for a fortnight afterwards, and he could not appear himself for a single day, I had gone to work at his rooms; now, with a chill upon my heart which I could not explain, I paid my second visit. When his landlady opened the door, I knew what had happened, and she, recognising me, began to wail, as a right-thinking and well-bred Scotswoman ought to do on such an occasion.

"'Come in, bye,' she said, with many tears; 'come in, bye; I ken yer face—ye were here a fortnight last Wednesday. An awfu' dispensation, and terrible sudden; gaein' aboot yesterday as livin' like as oorsels, and lyin' cauld this mornin'. A solemn warnin' to be prepared, and no to be pittin' aff to the last; there to-day, and here to-morrow,' added the excellent woman, with some confusion.

"'No that he was juist himsel' last nicht, for ye could hardly tell that he had been tastin'. He cam hame aboot ten instead o' twelve, and he was that quiet that I jaloused (suspected) there was something wrong; and he was that ceevil I was quite concerned, and I asked him if he wudna be the better of a warm drink.

"'There's nae doubt that he was given to tastin', and it was awfu' what he could carry, and he micht let drop an aith at a time when he was contradicted; but eh! sir, he was a learned man, and though he never

"I was beaten back."

gaed to kirk, he wud never let a word be said against the confession of faith. There was an impident whipper-snapper o' an English student that he was tutorin', and didna the body speak aw' nicht in this verry hoose—for I heard it through the open door—against John Calvin? And if Mr. McKinnon didna give him sic a round o' swearin'—for there's nae doobt he was a grand swearer—that the cratur came oot o' the room as white as

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a sheet. I'll warrant the smatchit'll no meddle wi' Calvin again,' said the landlady, with much appreciation of McKinnon's theological accomplishments, both in faith and word. 'A weel built and responsible lookin' man, and regular in his payments every Saturday nicht, though there were times he could hardly see the money. But we have all oor faults, sir, and his were upon the surface, and no worth mentioning the day. I'm judgin', from what he said to that Episcopalian haveril, that the root of the matter was in Mr. McKinnon. Ye'll be wantin' to see him?' and the landlady dropped her voice.

"It was in his sitting-room, littered with books and papers, black with calculations, that the landlady had reviewed Angus's character, and now we passed into the little bedroom which opened from the other room, and I looked on my tutor. He had already been dressed for burial, and the landlady was satisfied with his appearance.

"'Naebody, I have been telt, kent much aboot him, and they say he has no friends. It's a sad thing to be a lonely man. I considered that he was never happy, and mebbe he had his own trials; but he's sleepin' peacefu' now, and he never looked so bonny in his life as he does this day.

"'Yes, I sent for a doctor, and he said it was the heart; but it disna matter what it was. He's gone, and except yersel' and mebbe some other young gentleman that he tutored, and the college fouk that thocht so much of him, there's nobody to mourn him or take charge of him. Here's the key of his box. I've touched naething, and mebbe ye would open it and see whether ye can find the address of ony friend that should be asked to the funeral. And there's aye thing mair, sir,' and the landlady's voice dropped to an awe-struck whisper: 'when we dressed him, I found this little leather pouch hanging on his breast, and do ye see that it is sealed and that I havna opened it. Would ye tak charge o' it in case some friend should come to claim it? Ye micht open it to see if he has left any directions.'

"Once more I looked at my tutor; then, when the landlady had gone into the sitting-room, I kissed him and bade him farewell, realising then that in the short time I had known him I had come to love McKinnon. In the presence of the landlady I broke the seal and opened the little packet. It contained one short letter; but when I saw that the letter had no address, and was signed by a woman, I put it back in the case, and the case into my pocket, and told the landlady that it threw no light upon his family, but that I would keep it till it was claimed. I went to my rooms, forgetting that I had passed in mathematics and was now sure of my degree, and remembering only the tragedy of Angus McKinnon.

"It was our boyish way to celebrate the evening after a degree exam. by attending a Christy Minstrel function, and joining cheerfully in the choruses; but that night I shut myself in the room where I am, as it were, sitting while I tell this story, and which by every book and paper reminded me of Angus, and I mourned till night had passed into the morning. It is fair to take into account that I had been working for a fortnight till three in the morning, as well as the livelong day; that I had had no physical exercise, and had been intensely anxious—in short, that my nerves were overstrained; and now, upon the head of all, had come Angus's unexpected death, which in my heart I believed, and suspected the doctor knew, had been some form of suicide. The room was already, in my imagination, full of McKinnon before I took the packet out of my pocket and read the letter, at which before I had only glanced. With the after-look I am free to confess that I ought not to have read the letter, and that in all the circumstances I should have destroyed it unread. My excuse was then and is now, that it was not the curiosity of a stranger, but the love of a friend that moved me, for I was convinced that I held in my hand the secret of Angus McKinnon. As I took the letter out, I felt as if I should ask his permission, and for the moment as if across the table he had refused it with a fearful look, and had stretched out his hand to recover the letter. My fingers trembled when I unfolded the single sheet which contained on one side the whole letter. The writing was that of a well-educated woman, who through weakness was scarcely able to form the letters, and had to pause between the sentences, and this is what I read:—

"'DEAREST ONE,—The doctor says that I am dying, and there is something I wish to say to you before I die. I will write as well as I can, and the letter will be carried by sure hands. I have said that I slipped and was injured in the falling, and I charge you, as my last request, that you keep silence. I forgive you what you did, for it was your love turned into rage, and not your hand, which struck me. You know now that I

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was never untrue to you, my heart's love, and I die loving you as you love me.

"'Your faithful MORAG.'

"One understood it in a moment—his love for Morag, a girl of his own race by the name, though educated in the English speech, his jealousy of some other lover, his hot passion in some evil hour, and the ghastly issue which killed Morag and sent Angus forth to live in unquenchable remorse and self-loathing. As I held the letter in my hand, I was conscious of a strange and penetrating sensation, and now words, I am afraid, will fail to convey my experience. It was as if a wind were pouring into the room through some opening in the wall and filling the room with a new and strange atmosphere which surrounded me and chilled me. Holding the letter in my hand, I rose and faced the door as if IT had entered, and then I turned to the table as if someone were standing opposite me; then I made an effort and flung off the impression, and sat down again by the fire and read the letter again—I will not deny it—with tears. Poor Angus! Oh, the sorrow of things! I started to my feet imagining I had been touched, and looked round the room, where every corner was visible and in which every sight was commonplace. Where was IT? And now, under a compulsion, which I could not resist, of nervous terror, but at which I laughed within my heart, I searched the room—below the table, under the couch, in the shadow beyond the piano; and, still despising myself, I opened the doors of the chiffonier, in which nothing larger than a cat could have hidden, and lifted the lid of the piano. Nothing, of course. And although I did all this, I did not expect to find anything—I was not really looking for any visible person. Still holding the letter in my hand, I came back to my chair and was about to sit down, when, so far as I can describe it, the Presence in the room gathered itself together and came close to me and tried to master me.

"As I stood beside the table, my hands clenched and hanging by my side, and my feet rooted in the floor, the Presence flung itself round me as one would do who was trying to carry a person away; and although I knew not what it was, and knew not where it would carry me, I was convinced that I must resist with all my might, and that the resistance lay somehow in my will. If I—the personal being that says I—yielded for an instant, I would be lost, and the idea of lost, in the sense of yielding to this Presence, was charged with horror. It was a wrestle for life or death, and lasted perhaps only five minutes, and then the strain relaxed and I had for the moment conquered; I sank into the chair, and the perspiration rolled, rather in a stream than in drops, off my face. A horror laid hold upon me that, while the gas-lamps were burning in the street outside, and I could hear the sound of a belated passenger and the distant rattle of a cab, while there were living people in the rooms across the passage, I was shut into this room with the other world striving to conquer me. How, I could not explain; and for what end, I did not know. If the strain continued long, I should not be able to breathe. Making a great effort, I sprang to my feet and made a dash for the door. Before my hand was upon the handle, the Presence was between the door and me, and I was beaten back to where I had been standing; and now, shaken and weakened, I waited another wrestle. When suddenly there crept into my mind the idea that this Presence was not really hostile, but was contending for me to gain some end which was not my destruction. Could it be that McKinnon was acting on me from the other side?—and the moment that I thought of him the deadly fear began to lift. He had sinned openly before us all, and he had sinned grievously in a way we had not known; but the soul within him was not bad, and the power of McKinnon—if he had any power—would not be for death. As I was thinking, I was left untouched, as if IT understood that I was trying to understand. What ailed him, and what could he want? What was there that I could do for him? And Heaven knows that if I could serve McKinnon, I would, if only for his repentance and his agony. Morag was beyond my help, and yet it must have something to do with her in whom McKinnon's soul was bound up. Perhaps it was the letter, and I opened my closed fist and found the letter there crushed into a ball. As I looked at it and gently unfolded it, the Presence seemed again to enfold me—but how feeble words are to bring out the experience!—now it was with a persuasive and informing touch. It was the letter, and then in an instant I understood. I had broken upon the secret that was between the man and woman, and having done so thoughtless a deed, the letter might yet fall into others' hands, and the trust of Morag be broken. They were both on the other side; and while this letter lived, their story on

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"The Presence seemed to gather round my head with a caress."

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this side was not closed. All the time I was looking at the letter in my hand, and the Presence was around me. The fire was still burning, for I had been cold that evening and had built it high. As I moved a step towards the fireplace—now it seemed as if I were being led and urged—I knelt down, and then I touched the letter with my lips, as doing homage to a woman's faithful love, and thrust it into the heart of the red fire; and as I did so the Presence seemed to gather round my head with a caress. I leapt to my feet and cried aloud: 'Forgive me, Angus McKinnon; I thought not what I did!' I was alone in the room again, and the soul of Angus McKinnon was at rest.

"When Miss McKittrick came in, I thanked her for her courtesy and thoughtfulness, but did not tell her what had happened in that room thirty years before, and the scene I had rehearsed in her little drawing-room."

THE TRYST.
From a drawing by St. Clair Simmons.

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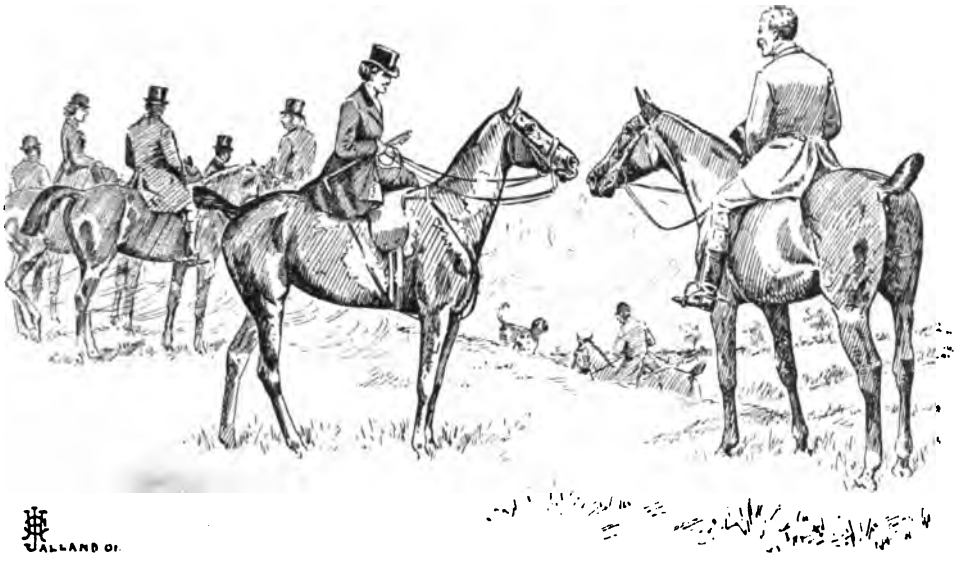

THE OBVIOUS INFERENCE.

"SHARP gallop, Miss Evelyn. Give you an idea what your new mount is made of."
"Yes, indeed! And from the way he lathers, I should say he was made of soap!"

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

THE MAN OF DUTY.

MR. FIPPS was a man within whose bosom burned like a flame a sense of public duty. Whenever and wherever he saw the world out of joint, it was his positive pleasure to set it right. He never travelled by rail without reporting the engine-driver, the guard, two porters, and a station-master. He never entered an omnibus without taking the name of the conductor, or a cab without having use for its number. Wherever an umbrella was being brandished aloft to stay the progress of a motor-car, a van, or a bicyclist, his friends knew whose it was, and scuttled up the side streets.

The other day Mr. Fipps set forth to the City to attend a meeting—Mr. Fipps's speeches, beginning "Although but a small shareholder," are well known to the financial reporter—and his eye was keen as ever in the public service. Immediately before him walked two apparent gentlemen of responsible aspect. They were too slow for Mr. Fipps, and he was just about to bustle past them, when he overheard one say, in the ordinary tones of conversation: "You see, there can be no doubt that we have committed a fraud."

Mr. Fipps fell back again, to hear the other reply: "Yes, a particularly bad one. We couldn't possibly go into the box."

"Aha!" thought Mr. Fipps.

"I don't quite like the whole business," said the first.

"Quite like, indeed!" said Mr. Fipps to himself.

"Ah, well, we'll see it through," said the other comfortably.

"Yes, you will," thought Mr. Fipps.

"I'm going on," said the first. "How's the wife?"

"So so," and they parted, the one into a building of offices, the other down the street.

Mr. Fipps's mind was made up in an instant. They were both apparently equally guilty. He would wait at the door till a policeman came, and together they would watch for the one who had entered the building to come out. With a rapturous eye he saw his common police-court achievements crowned by an appearance in the witness-box at the Old Bailey. He was so pleased with the idea that he forgot to time the arrival of a policeman. In all probability this hastened the approach of the officer of the law, for in a few minutes he hove in sight, and eventually became conscious of Mr. Fipps's wildly waving umbrella.

"S'sh!" said Mr. Fipps, as he approached.

"Well, sir?" said the policeman.

"Inside that building," said Mr. Fipps, swollen with importance, "is a man who has committed a crime."

"What crime?" said the policeman, producing his note-book.

"Oh—er—a fraud of some kind," said Mr. Fipps.

"Fraud on 'oom?" asked the policeman, licking his pencil.

"I don't know," said Mr. Fipps.

"Pusson unknown," noted the policeman. "What kind of a fraud?"

"What does it matter?" said Mr. Fipps irritably.

The policeman closed his note-book with a snap.

"Matter? Of course it matter" said th

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"THE CUP THAT CHEERS BUT NOT INEBRIATES."

policeman, looking suspicious. "Now, if *you* please, what 'ave you to say for yerself?"

"What have I to say for myself?" repeated Mr. Fipps indignantly. "I tell you there's a man in that building guilty of a fraud. I heard him say so with his own lips."

The policeman looked sceptical, and Mr. Fipps turned round in exasperation. Doing so, he was confronted with the other conspirator, who was walking into the building with the utmost *sang froid*.

"And that's the other one," he gasped. "I insist upon his arrest."

The conspirator looked astonished, so did the policeman. So did a gathering knot of men and boys.

"Arrest him!" shouted Mr. Fipps, pointing down the delinquent with his denouncing umbrella. The delinquent glanced with annoyance at the crowd.

"I don't know what this good man thinks he is

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talking about," he said. "My name is Gregson, of the firm of Morris and Gregson, solicitors, and we have offices in this building. This is Mr. Morris."

With the utmost effrontery the other elderly man came out and looked at Mr. Fipps with mere surprise. It was more than Mr. Fipps could bear. In stentorian tones he shouted: "Constable, do your duty! I accuse both these men of fraud, upon their own confession."

* * * *

Mr. Fipps never can and never will believe that it is the ancient custom of lawyers to talk of their clients as themselves, and that the subject of the conversation of Messrs. Morris and Gregson was an erring gentleman whose business was in their hands. His anger at the policeman's stolid refusal to arrest them is to a considerable extent aggravated by the legal proceedings, involving, he is informed, heavy damages, which Messrs. Morris and Gregson are initiating against him. Never again, he asserts, never again will he attempt to serve an ungrateful public.

Harold White.

MAN'S DENSITY.

SHE: I looked at the sweetest hat to-day for only three-and-a-half guineas.

HE: Humph! Wasn't that a good deal for looking at a hat?

HE (at a dance): My name's Brown, but I have several relations here. You'd better put down C. Brown, to distinguish me.

SHE: Then I'll put you down as C.B. That's very distinguished!

TINY (aged two, who has been told he must not ask for anything on the dinner table): Mummy, if I *don't* ask for a pear, may I have one?

MOTHER: Now, Georgie, repeat this after me. "Bird's in their little nests agree."

GEORGIE (aged four): "Birds in their little nests agree."

MOTHER (wishing to test his memory): *What* do birds in their little nests do?

GEORGIE (promptly): Lay eggs.

SHE: What kind of Christmas present shall I buy you while I am out, dear?

HE: Oh, any cheap article, Maria. Remember, I can't afford to spend much this year.

MISS ROBINSON'S fur necklet is blown off. Of course, Brown and Jones give chase—straight into a snowdrift! To make matters worse, Miss Robinson's voice is heard in the distance: "Oh! please don't trouble. I think I can reach it with the stick!"

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A COAL-DEALER recently received from a prominent shoddyite who had been to Paris an order for five tons of coal "à la cart."

THIS affecting dialogue once took place in an American school:—

TEACHER (looking with stern accusation at a small, red-haired girl): Clara, what have you in your mouth?

GIRL (in downcast tones): Chewing-gum.

TEACHER (coldly): Please put it in the waste-basket.

Sobs from the girl.

TEACHER: Why don't you do as you're told?

GIRL (in a burst of emotion): Please—it's my brother's!"

MODESTY.

SHE: What is your charge?

HE: One shilling the first hour, and sixpence the next.

SHE: Oh, I have no wish to be first! When would the second hour commence?

"I AM making a Christmas gift for you, dear," said the young wife, looking up from her fancy-work. "It's to be a surprise."

"How can it be a surprise when I see you working on it every day?" inquired her husband.

"Oh, the surprise'll be when I tell you what it's for."—*Woman's Home Companion, U.S.A.*

A SMALL boy was found by his father crying on the stairs after dinner of fish and egg sauce on Ash Wednesday.

"Hallo, Eric! What's the matter, my boy?" said the parent.

"Oh!" replied Eric, sobbing, "I'll *never* fast any more, father; it makes me too uncomfortable!"

BADLY EXPRESSED.

HE: I've finished the picture, but goodness knows when I shall sell it!

SHE: I'll tell you what to do—show it to young Softleigh. He'll buy it. He's an awful fool with his money.

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FACES IN THE FIRE.

From a Picture by Marcella Walker.

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ON THE FLANK OF THE ARMY.

By WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL, M.P.*

THE darkness had altogether passed away; yet the sun was still below the horizon, and a haze that seemed half dust, half steam, growing rosier and thinner every moment, lay spread over the indefinite expanse of plain. The air was clear, under a steel blue sky, and the mist below, rapidly dispersing or sinking back into the ground, revealed in ever-widening prospect the majestic proportions of the African veldt.

Two men stood on a hillock of stones and boulders, looking out intently over the subsiding obscurity towards the west—one a thick-set, dark-bearded fellow, the other a smooth-faced child. Both were armed with long rifles and accoutred with heavy bandoleers filled with cartridges.

"Are they trekking yet, Jan?" said the elder.

"Father, how shall I see with my eyes, when you have the glasses?" was the rough reply.

"These Hollander glasses are no good until it is full light; and at your age, my son, I could see better with the eyes that God gives Afrikanders than with any foreign glasses."

There was an interval of silence. The boy stared and frowned at the plain before him. "They are trekking now," he said at length; and then, after a long pause, "north again."

"To Pretoria," muttered the father. "They come not towards us. Nevertheless, we will abide. Perhaps they will send scouts to watch their flank. Let us remain longer."

And then, as the sun at their backs was up and might show their figures in dangerous silhouette upon the sky-line, both the Boers instinctively settled down among the rocks and merged themselves in the background, until the fierce, bronzed faces and keen eyes seemed to belong to some rugged breed of creatures evolved from the kopje itself, and not to men of modern times. Nearly half an hour passed before either spoke. Then the father asked—

"What do you see?"

"Nine, that I can count," replied Jan. "'Tis a party sent to search the spruit. Only the spies will come across the water; but," and his voice grew hard, "they that cross shall not return."

Far away to the westward an endless line of dust tossed and billowed over a crawling column as it persevered in its northern march; and between this and the watchers, still nearly five miles away, a group of tiny brown specks was drawing steadily nearer to the rocky, bush-entangled valley through which the Wildebeeste Spruit trickles to join the Rhenoster River.

"Come," said Hans Retief, field-cornet of what remained of the Ermelo commando, to his son, aged fourteen, "it is time to tell the others."

Without exposing themselves above the crest for an instant, they descended the kopje and made their way through the scrub to the bed of the stream by which the commando had made its bivouac. Around a clear pool about sixty burghers sat smoking and talking. Their horses, nearly a hundred in number, grazed under the care of a dozen Kaffir servants in a neighbouring hollow, which, hidden entirely from the surrounding plain, sloped gently down to the water's edge. The Boers looked up as their field-cornet arrived.

"What is it?" they asked. He began to explain.

* * * * *

The patrol came briskly forward over the successive swells of ground towards the Wildebeeste Spruit. There were in all eight lancers and an officer. They advanced in the correct manner prescribed by the books on war—one man nearly a quarter of a mile ahead; two spread as far on each flank; two riding with the lieutenant; and one straggling away three hundred yards behind. The officer in command, Lieutenant Henry Morelande, was a young gentleman of nineteen, who had held the Queen's commission for a little more than ten months, one of which he had spent on board ship and the others at the war. He was working by a map which he held in his right hand spread over his field service note-book. He stopped fre-

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quently to look at the broken ground and kopjes in his front with his field-glasses. Twice he dismounted, and taking a long telescope from one of his men, examined the rocks and scrub with methodical patience.

Arrived within three-quarters of a mile of this dangerous region, the officer whistled and the whole patrol halted. He got off his horse leisurely and then set to work again with his telescope. Suddenly he rose, scrambled into his saddle, and waved his hand in signal to his men. As he did so, the sergeant, who had also dismounted, fired two shots with his carbine towards a red-looking kopje, and then all the patrol wheeled about and scampered off at a gallop.

The sharp reports of the shots rang out in the still air. The clatter of the retreating patrol died away. Profound silence brooded over the rocky hills and the inhospitable thorn bushes of the valley, and no sign of life or sound of death disturbed the grim repose of the landscape.

After his patrol had retreated perhaps a quarter of a mile, the lieutenant pulled his horse into a walk, stopped, turned again towards the kopjes, and took another long look at them through his glasses.

"Beg pardon, sir," said the sergeant, "there aren't any burghers there. That would have drawn their fire for sure. Why, at Colesberg, sir, in January, that trick came off every time."

The subaltern looked at him uncertainly.

"They're learning as well as we," he replied. "They may be lying low all the time. But we know one thing now, at any rate."

"What's that, sir?"

"That we haven't seen them yet." He laughed a little bitterly. "Well, orders are orders, and there's nothing to do but to chance it. Tell the point to get across the stream and on to the top of that kopje, on the other side—see the one I mean?—where those big red rocks are, as quick as he can, and wave his helmet if all's clear."

The sergeant trotted off to tell the lancer in question, and meanwhile the little party of soldiers, still in their extended order, walked slowly forward again towards the watercourse. The leading trooper cantered forward on his perilous errand. He rode steadily on until he was lost among the rocks and bushes, stopped for a moment in the sandy bed of the stream to water his horse, looked sourly right and left at the hollows and ridges that rose and fell on all sides, any one of which might have concealed a hundred riflemen, and presently emerged into the open country beyond the Wildebeeste Spruit. When he reached the queer red rocks which the sergeant had pointed out, he dismounted and peered over. Beyond lay a smooth stretch of plain, terminating at a distance of half a mile in a chain of little rocky eminences exactly similar to that on which he stood. All was silent and deserted. He waved his helmet, and the patrol immediately broke into a trot and, hurrying through the dangerous ground, came towards him.

As soon as the last horseman had crossed the spruit and was making his way towards the red rocks, forty burghers of the Ermelo commando, who had been waiting a mile up stream, mounted their horses and in single file began to hasten down the watercourse.

The patrol did not wait long at the red rocks, but turned northwards, intending to work their way back to the main column as soon as possible. They had proceeded in this new direction for perhaps a quarter of an hour, when suddenly from the kopje they had so lately left, "Pip-pop! pip-pop! pip-pop!" cracked and pattered a dozen shots, the prelude of a regular fusillade. All turned at once. There among the red rocks, standing up in full view, outlined against the sky, were nearly twenty Boers. Four or five more were riding along in the open ground to the eastward.

There was no time for much reflection. The bullets piped and whistled overhead. "Back across the spruit!" cried the lieutenant. "Gallop!" and suiting the action to the word, he started off towards the watercourse, followed by his lancers, who began unwisely but instinctively to draw together in their common danger. The dust jumped here and there around them as they rode. A hundred yards from the edge of the spruit the sergeant's horse collapsed, throwing him heavily. The officer reined in at once.

"Go on!" he said to his men. "Wait for me on the other side. Hit, sergeant?"

"No, sir, but my poor 'orse has got it bad."

"Pip-pop! pip-pop! pip-pop!" pattered the pursuing musketry. Two bullets struck on a rock near by, making a curious thwack. Another skimmed past with the buzz of an angry bee. Morelande drew his right foot from the stirrup.

"Take the leather," said he, "and run; 'tis all I can do till we get to cover."

They started forward in the direction in which the others had disappeared, scrambled down the side of the spruit—here almost a ravine—brushed through the thorn bushes,

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"'They are trekking now.'"

and blundered to the bottom of the watercourse into the very midst of a crowd of Boers who had already almost disarmed their comrades. The surprise was mutual and complete. The Dutchmen, who thought themselves already possessed of the whole party, were so close together and so disposed that they could not fire for fear of shooting one another. The lieutenant drew his revolver.

"Surrender!" shouted the Boers, and while one seized the bridle of the horse, three pounced upon the sergeant.

"Halt, or we shoot!" they cried. For answer Morelande drove his spurs home and put his horse at the steep bank before him. The strong English charger, plunging forward, overthrew the burgher who clutched wildly at the reins, and leaped up the slope. One small figure alone barred the road to safety. It was little Jan. He stood at the top of the bank, levelling a Mauser rifle as long as himself. The subaltern, who realised, perhaps, that his solitary antagonist masked the fire of all the rest, held on his course unswervingly, and so these two, one a child, the other not yet a man, met face to face in grim and deadly war. Perhaps if Jan had fired at once, he would have succeeded; indeed, he could hardly miss; but wishing to make quite certain—for were not all the commando looking on?—he waited till the horse was almost upon him. Either the rush of the animal or the keen young face which glared at him behind the pistol made him lose his head. He fired wildly. The bullet cut the subaltern's ear, and the explosion scorched and blackened his cheek. He twisted violently in his saddle with shock and pain, and the next instant, smarting and desperate, he was upon his enemy. By all the customs of the game it was his turn now. Dropping his rifle, the young Boer raised his hands as if to ward off a blow. The officer thrust his pistol in

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his face and cried in a tone of furious anger—

"You little fool! I'd like to smack your head!"

In a moment he was gone, amid a vengeful crackle of shots, and the Boers were on their horses and after him in hot pursuit. The chase did not last long. The gallant charger was grievously wounded, and in less than a mile he sank exhausted to the ground. Morelande dragged himself clear and looked about him. The leading Boers were not yet in sight. He stood at the edge of a large patch of Indian corn, nearly five feet high and several acres in extent. It was his only refuge.

The Dutchmen came galloping up a minute later. They saw the horse sobbing in its death agony.

"He cannot be far," they said. Then they examined the ground round the horse, and found the tracks leading into the Indian corn. "Here he is!" they cried, and rode in among the crop impatiently.

For more than ten minutes, however, their search was fruitless. Morelande, pressing himself into the raw, damp earth, scarcely dared to breathe. Once a horseman stepped right over him; another missed him by a few yards only. The Boers began to get angry.

"Let us follow the tracks," said one at length; "they will surely show us the way."

So back they all went to the dead horse, and began trying to follow the footprints. But, of course, their own tracks had now crossed these many times, and after groping in the mud for some time, they wearied of the task. Several trotted off to search beyond the mealies; others abandoned the chase and, dismounting, lighted their pipes and said—

"Let the Englander go. We will catch some more to-morrow."

Then spoke little Jan, in his shrill voice—

"No, no; he must be here! Do thou, father, make them walk through in line; then must we catch him for certain."

"It is so," said the burghers; "the boy is right. Come—all together."

So they left their horses and formed a line right across the mealie patch, and advanced each only fifty paces from the other Morelande, who lay hidden but a few yards from the edge, could hear every word Hope which had surged within his breast froze into despair. He heard the beaters drawing nearer, and a well-remembered picture rose in his mind. He was back in that famous island so far off, so different that it seemed now to belong to another world. It was the first day of the season. In the clear air of a September morning he saw the line of guns brushing through the clover of the Morelande Park. His father was among them; and Robbens, the head-keeper, in his green coat; and Monarch, his favourite dog. Would he ever see these things again? The swish of the mealies came very near. He thought of the hare crouching in her form, ears laid back, nostrils quivering, and an eye that seemed to listen. Poor beasts! How they screamed when they were hit! Would he?

They were past him.

They had missed him again. Surely this was the end.

When the Boers reached the far end of the cover, they stopped and began to dispute.

"Back again, once more," pleaded little Jan. "He must be there."

"Why didn't you shoot straight, boy?" replied one of the burghers; "we should not have had all this trouble then."

However, in the end, being men whom difficulties make more obstinate, they persevered. Morelande heard them coming back. Again he pressed his face into the earth and almost held his breath. The rustling came nearer. He did not stir, but he feared they must hear his heart and the throbbing of the blood in his ears. The mealies parted.

"Get up!" said a gruff voice; then louder: "Here he is—I've got him!"

Morelande turned round and rose, pistol in hand, to find himself looking into the polished barrel of a Mauser rifle. "Drop your weapon!" cried the Boer, and the futility of resistance being plain, the subaltern did so.

He was soon the centre of a crowd of sturdy, bearded fellows, who stared at him and grinned. "Aha, old chappie!" said one, "you're pretty slim, but you can't outwit the Boers. We saw you trying to draw our fire. That was very clever, but not quite clever enough for the Ermelo fellows."

At this moment the field-cornet and his son Jan came up—the former grave and stolid as ever, but the boy was full of triumph.

"Look here, Mr. Englishman," he cried, "I caught you. All the others wanted to give it up. But I made them go on hunting. Would you like to thrash me now?"

The subaltern, from the superior age of nineteen, looked at him disdainfully

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"He waited till the horse was almost upon him."

"You'd better learn to shoot, baby," he answered, "before you come to the war."

The tone and the taunt stung. The burghers laughed loudly. Jan flushed red with shame and passion; but before he could reply, the old field-cornet put his hand upon his shoulder and, twisting him round, said sharply: "Who gave you leave to speak to a prisoner? Be off at once!" and Jan slunk away abashed.

"Forward!" said Retief to the others. "March the officer back to the spruit."

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In the stream bed Morelande found his men—five in all—prisoners like himself. Two had apparently escaped, and the sergeant had died fighting. The Boers bade him sit down in the shade of a bush, offered him a little biltong, and left him to his own bitter reflections. Presently the field-cornet arrived.

"Where is the officer's revolver?" he inquired.

"I have it here," said one of the burghers.

"Let me look at it."

The man passed him the weapon. Retief opened the breech and shook six live cartridges out into his hand. "When did you load this pistol, lieutenant?" he asked.

"This morning before I started," replied Morelande, wondering at the question.

"It is a good weapon," said Retief carelessly. "I hate that nickel-plated trash!" And giving the pistol back to its owner, he turned away.

The afternoon wore wearily along. Shame, disgust, and anger plunged the subaltern in the deepest gloom. The good-natured Boers tried to cheer him according to their ideas.

"Never mind," they said; "you will not have to fight any more now. You will live to see the end of the war for certain. It is you who are lucky."

But Morelande had no heart to answer. What would they say at home? "Another stupid officer." "Led his men into a trap." "Neglect of the ordinary precautions of war." Yet he knew that it was not his fault. What chance had a stray patrol in such a country, against such a foe? And then to lose all the opportunities of the campaign—to be a miserable prisoner! He groaned aloud.

"Keep the lieutenant separate from the men," said the field-cornet, when night drew on. Then to Morelande: "You can sleep under my wagon, if you like; there will be no dew there."

The subaltern thanked him and moved accordingly to the wagon, which stood fifty yards away from the rest of the little camp.

"Be good," said Retief, in a loud voice, "and lie quietly, then no one will harm you. But the Kaffir will watch continually, and if you try to escape, you will be shot."

"I know that," replied the subaltern, and turning over, he set himself to sleep. For a long time he tried in vain; but at last the world and its troubles slipped away, and all was dark and quiet.

He awoke suddenly. A hand lay upon his arm. The field-cornet was beside him.

"Speak low," he said, holding up a warning finger. "Do you want your freedom?"

"What do you mean?"

"Suppose I let you go?"

"I know your tricks," replied the subaltern acidly. "You don't catch me that way. How many yards will you give me before you fire?"

"Lieutenant Morelande," said Retief impassively, "you are an honourable man, and so am I. Jan, that little one who fired at you this morning in the spruit, is my only son."

"Ah!" said the officer bitterly, "and if I had shot him, I should be free to-night."

"Because you did not shoot him, you shall be free to-night. Listen," he went on. "That Kaffir is my Kaffir. He sees, he hears, he speaks as I tell him, and not otherwise. There is a horse saddled behind the kopje. If you dare, take your chance within the hour. You will not get another. To-morrow we shall be in General De Wet's laager."

"But what will happen to you?"

"Never mind me; leave me and leave my country to manage our own affairs," and without another word he walked over to the fire that smouldered redly, and sat himself down before it, staring into the glow.

Morelande considered. Was it a trap? On the other hand, at any rate, it was a chance, and he was bound to take it.

* * * * *

He began to crawl along the ground. In a few minutes he approached the Kaffir sentry, whose solitary figure stood black and clear in the moonlight. A brittle stick cracked beneath his knee. Now he would know for certain. But the native remained motionless, looking out upon the veldt, and seemed to have heard nothing. Morelande, encouraged, persevered more rapidly. Twice he glanced back. Behind him the Boer encampment lay silent and undisturbed. The dark forms of the slumbering burghers were tranquil. Only one sleepless man crouched over the fire, blocked in jet against its blaze. Presently he reached the shelter of the bushes. The kopje stood before him. He groped his way gingerly around it. There, sure enough, upon the other side stood the horse. With a wild feeling of joy, he hastened towards it, unfastened the *reim* by which it was haltered, and mounted. Free once more!

"Halt!" cried a high-pitched voice he had learned to hate. "Who goes there?"

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"Without further parley, he jerked the small Dutchman off the ground."

It was Jan, but Jan unarmed and alone. Morelande rode at him and, leaning forward, caught the boy by the collar. "If you utter a word," he said, "I will kill you!"

"Help!" shouted Jan lustily in Dutch. "A prisoner is escaping!"

Only a year before, Morelande had played in the Harrow football eleven, and he knew his strength. Without further parley, he jerked the small Dutchman off the ground, threw him kicking and screaming across the front of his saddle, and galloped into the

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night. Behind arose the noises of alarm, confused shouts and cries, which grew fainter in the distance and presently died away. For an hour he hurried on. At length he topped a rise. There before him, scarcely two miles away to the westward, gleamed in regular lines the fires of the British bivouac.

He pulled the horse to a halt and lowered his captive, silent enough now, to the ground.

"Look there," he said, turning him towards the lights. "How would you like to go there?" The boy glared at him sullenly. "Run back now," continued the subaltern; "tell them which way I've gone; and don't forget to learn to shoot before we meet again."

Then, shaking the horse into a trot, he rode away, leaving the implacable Jan speechless with rage and disappointment.

DAFFODILS IN THE STRAND.

DAFFODILS in the Strand are blowing,
Daffodils with lusty stem,
Daffodils as fresh and golden
As beside the river's hem.
Daffodils all wet with shadow,
Daffodils all sweet with sun,
Daffodils a-lilt with laughter
Where tired feet pass, one by one.

Daffodils in the Strand are blowing,
Daffodils with windy grace,
Nodding heads, and wanton motion
As in any country place.
Daffodils 'mid dust and clamour,
Curtsying in a gown of gold,
Daffodils a-lilt with laughter
Where dry hearts pass dull and cold.

Daffodils in the Strand are blowing,
Rubbed by Gentile, touched by Jew,
Daffodils all swept with moisture
From the mossy banks I knew.
Oh! the London din and glamour,
Prisoned in a coster's hand,
Country hearts give up their sweetness—
Daffodils blowing in the Strand!

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.

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A JOURNEY BY THE WAY OF THE PHILISTINES.

By Mrs. Gray Hill.*

Illustrated from Oil and Water Colour Sketches and Photographs by the Author.

ALL the armies that have invaded Syria from Egypt, or Egypt from Syria, the greater part of the traffic of merchants between the two countries from a very remote past down to recent times, the slave-dealers who carried Joseph with them as a chattel to be sold in Egypt, his brethren who went down from Syria to buy corn in the valley of the Nile, Joseph of Nazareth and the Virgin with the infant Jesus escaping from the soldiers of Herod, must all have passed across the tract of barren and almost waterless land known as the "Little Desert," or, as it is called in the Bible, "the way of the Philistines."

OASIS OF EL GOUGA.

Before the establishment of steam traffic between Alexandria or Port Said and Jaffa, merchandise was still generally conveyed by this route. But now, although the telegraph wire can carry the news across the sand in a moment (I have known it, however, to take nine days in the process and sometimes not to carry news entrusted to it at all), and although a solitary postman mounted on a swift dromedary rides each way once a week with a letter-bag, the merchandise which passes consists of little but horses going from Syria to the Cairo market. Eothen passed this way in the summer heat, but it is now very rarely that a European traveller treads this ancient path. Probably some day the railway will destroy its romance for ever; but till that fell invader comes, those who love unclouded skies of brilliant azure, the purest and most invigorating of air, little oases of palm trees springing up under intensely yellow hills of virgin sand, occasional glimpses of the deep blue of the Mediterranean, above all freedom complete and unbroken from the labours and worries of our busy work-a-day world, and relief for a brief space from the commonplace surroundings of English life, will find nothing in this wide world more delightful than a ride in the spring of the year across this desert from the Suez Canal to Gaza, where the fertile, undulating lands of Southern Philistia, rich with wild flowers and young barley, begin to roll away to the plain of Sharon and the Judæan hills.

Twice my husband and I have together made this delightful journey, and once I have made it alone. The following is a description of one of these most pleasant rides.

Our tents were pitched ready to receive us at El Kantara, which travellers who have passed through the Suez Canal will remember as the first station north of Ismailia, and we reached them soon after leaving our British steamer at Port Said.

Can there be anything more charming to one who has had former happy experiences of camp life in Syria than to see the good tents pitched, the preparations making for the evening meal, the animals fresh for the journey tethered round and eating and drinking their fill, the last light of the sun dying out from a daffodil sky, and the young moon already shedding a brilliant light, and promising a week hence to make the night as resplendent as the day? If there is, we have never known it. It was strange as we sat late that evening upon the banks of the Canal with the desert at our back, to watch

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OASIS OF EL KATYA.

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the great steamers pass up and down, with the electric lights hanging at their bows casting a brilliant arc of radiance in front of them, while as they moved away from us the darkness closed in all the blacker behind. What an impressive contrast between the restless, powerful present exemplified in the passing vessels, and the unbroken calm of the long past which seems to haunt the desert! How much longer will that tranquillity remain undisturbed?

Early on the morning of the next day we awoke to a lovely dawn, and after one more look at the majestic ships passing silently through the sandy waste we turned our faces to the north-east and rode joyously forth. We had with us our old dragoman and factotum, George Mabbedy, and eight other men, together with a wild-looking fellow from the neighbourhood of Gaza who acted as a guide, and whom from his close resemblance to one of the human wolf faces of Lavater we christened the "Wolf." The usual complement of horses, mules, and donkeys, and three camels to carry water for

THE DESERT.

ourselves and barley for our horses, made up our caravan. It had come for us from Jerusalem, whither we were bound.

Two of our men—old friends—told us how they had arrived at the Canal without food or money, and had run along the bank offering an *abiyeh* (native woollen cloak) to a passing English steamer as a price for their conveyance to Ismailia, and how someone on board, not understanding what they wanted, pointed a pistol at them, whereupon they fell back disheartened and exhausted.

A few hours of very pleasant riding over sand interspersed with a little scrub, in sunlight brilliant but not oppressive, and in air light and buoyant as the spirit of hope, brought us within sight of the group of palms called El Gouga, where our tents were pitched for the night. At sight of the grateful shade our tired but brave little mares, scenting rest and water, made a rush through the heavy sand until we dismounted. A roll in that great purifier refreshed them mightily, and they were then tethered to palm trees to enjoy the shade. The sun made beautiful shadows of the long elegant stems and tufted heads of the palm trees, and a flickering light on the white sand. The rest and peace after the long hours in the saddle were more charming than I can tell. We sat in the soft, yielding sand, elbowed out for ourselves arm-chairs in it, and fell into a sweet sleep while the soft air blew over us. Then climbing up a slope, and passing through the palm grove, we saw the desert stretching away in a wide undulating expanse to the eastward, and on the horizon a chain of bare hills.

The well at El Gouga, like almost all the wells which we saw in the "Little Desert," is walled round with the trunks of palm trees instead of stones, of which latter none are to be found in the district of sufficient size for the purpose. But the water in these wells is not great in volume, and is

THE DESERT.

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nearly all brackish and unwholesome. Where did the vast hordes of men and beasts, toiling over this thirsty land to invade the rich country beyond, find their drinking and cooking water? Are there not great tanks made by the mighty men of old buried beneath these sands? Or is it true, as we have heard, that water can be obtained almost anywhere in the desert by digging? On the way to El Gouga we passed the postman from Jaffa riding on a dromedary. He reported the road as safe and sped swiftly on.

A splendid sunset, perfect peace, "starry darkness . . . clothed with calm," deep, happy sleep, and a reawakening to a cloudless dawn followed upon the first pleasant day of our journey. It was like "a world of one entire and perfect chrysolite" for beauty and delight.

THE OASIS OF EL ARISH.

On our way we passed several small groups of palms sheltered under the sand-hills, and one well (Bir el Nus). Some of the hills of sand we saw were several hundred feet high, their tops being wreathed up by the wind into sharp curved edges and peaks, which probably change their shape and appearance with every gale that blows. These hills of pure, untrodden sand, smooth as fallen snow, stand out against the blue sky in the intensely clear atmosphere of this silent land in the most striking way. Scarcely a human being is met with in the long day's march, and only a hoopoe or a sandpiper flies by. Once, however, we saw a great flight of flamingoes wheeling round and round high in the air, showing as they turned first one universal flash of white, and then of red, or rather a reddish purple, that seemed borrowed from the brush of that great colorist the late Sir Edward Burne-Jones. They circled in majestic bands, broke up into smaller bodies, reunited, and separated again, and finally, to our great regret, gradually faded from our sight in one long flight eastwards. A splendid glow of orange tint in the sky compensated us that evening for the loss of these lovely birds.

The next day, the next, and the next were all as pleasant. We had travelled far along the beautiful sandy desert when in the distance appeared the groves of palms of Katya. Horses and men summoned up all their strength, and hastened on to the longed-for water and shade. Our cook set out in search of food. A chicken was all we hoped for. Inside some fences of palm branches within the grove we found an old man, of whom we asked a fowl. "I have chickens plenty, but don't give them to you." The cook said: "We do not ask them with nothing; we buy for money." "Not for money, either," said the surly old man. But his wife, seeing the silver coins, came up at once with a scraggy hen, and the old man was shunted and we began to bargain. Even the scraggiest hens will make soup, so we got a fair evening meal of this and rice, and went to rest again with the beautiful feeling of tired limbs, and with a brilliant moonlight all round us. What a glorious night it was! After a good sleep we got up and opened the tent door in the utter silence of the night, and watched the reflections of the tall trees and the distant billowy sand, silver white, reaching to the horizon under the light of the heavens. Such scenes cannot be described in words, but it is a joy of life to see and have remembrance of them.

My drawing represents a *kouba*, or tomb of

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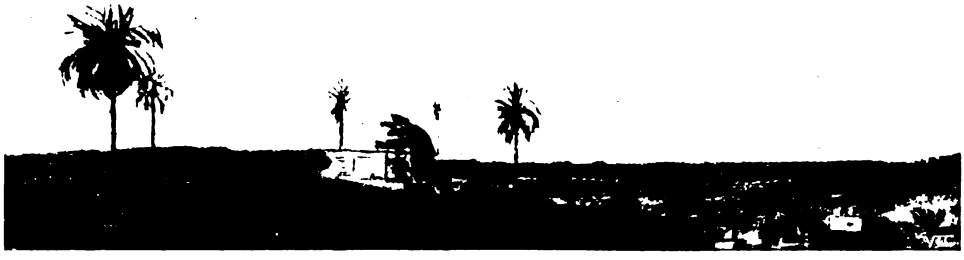

TOMB OF A MOSLEM SAINT.

some Moslem saint. It is surrounded by a few rude graves.

Six days' riding under brilliant sunshine, and yet not in weather oppressively hot (for a fresh north wind blew in from the sea); sometimes through the virgin sand, deep and heavy for the horses, sometimes through the low scrub, amongst which (sign of recent rain) large yellow daisies now and then appeared; crossing wide *mellehas*, or hollows in which salt is found on the surface of the ground, and gathered by the Beduins for their use; reposing for the noonday halt under a solitary palm tree or in the open plain; resting often on the pure sand; watching in the fading light of day the camels coming down to the well, and the Ishmaelites drawing water for them; awakened by lovely dawns, and rocked to repose by more lovely sunsets, and at night camped under the "majestical roof fretted with golden fire" which there spans the desert, brought us to El Arish, which is the farthest outpost of Egypt to the eastward.

The approach to this little town, after the long days in the desert, excited much joy in the whole caravan. The thought of the *narghilé* and coffee-house, with the gossip and news given and received, made the muleteers very happy, and the sight of dwellings, though of the poorest kind, brought pleasure to them. In the distance one sees the little garrison town on the height, in the foreground a big ridge of cactus plants, and in the middle distance a small plantation of juniper trees, and beyond, and framing the whole landscape, a long line of deep blue sea. The whole life of the place is given up to the caravan traffic, and camels are the riches of the community. It stands about two miles from the sea, whose sands are here always encroaching. Dromedaries are kept at El Arish. This being the border town, many runaways and rogues,

CROSSING A MELLEHA.

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TOWN OF EL ARISH.

Beduins and others, are captured in and near the place, and are sent off to Cairo or Jerusalem. Quails are found here, and the people get fish out of the sea.

Coming down to the shore shortly before sunset, we found a dead turtle lying on its back on the sandy beach. At a little distance from the town, on the border of an oasis, we pitched our camp. No sooner had we done so than an Egyptian quarantine officer came up, and maintaining, notwithstanding our protests, that we had come from Jerusalem instead of Cairo, wanted to put us into quarantine. Fortunately, we were provided with a letter of recommendation from the Governor of Cairo to the Governor of El Arish, which soon put the matter right. The latter Governor lives in a *khalat*, or castle, and has a military force of fifty or sixty men with which to keep the Beduins in order; and the thick and high walls of the castle would, I suppose, be as impregnable to the tribes now as in the days before gunpowder.

The morning after our arrival we went to call on this functionary, who showed us a fine deep well of good water, of which he was very proud. A remarkably handsome camel worked the wheel which raised the water, and close to it was a small stone box-like sarcophagus, covered all over, inside and out, with hieroglyphics, which he said had recently been discovered in the neighbourhood. It had apparently stood upright, as at one end was a conical top that gave it the appearance of a watch-box for a baby soldier. Round the *khalat* nestles the little town, with its poor bazaar and mosques and mud-walled houses. The people are all Moslems, and are said to be very fanatical, which is very probable, as they are almost entirely cut off from the rest of the world by the desert on three sides and the sea in front. Then we went to see the head of the Egyptian police, who sat at a table surrounded by soldiers. The walls of the room were papered with photographs of criminals who may be expected to pass through here, escaping from Egypt to Syria, or from Syria to Egypt. He offered us two soldiers as escort, and asked us to let him know if

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WEDDING FESTIVITIES.

we met any of the men represented on the walls. The soldiers laughed when we said that we thought we had better offer coffee to any such folk, and not quarrel with them.

As we were about to leave El Arish, we heard the sound of tom-toms and drums in the distance, and thinking it must be a wedding, we went to see the fun. A picturesque crowd had gathered round two dummy figures, which were paraded on camels and represented the bride and groom. They walked round and round to the noise of the crowd, which became quite excited as the tom-toms beat quicker and quicker, whilst scores of youths and boys kept time by clapping their hands. At last a circle was formed on the sand, and these two scarecrow figures were made to move up and down in the middle. The camels were dressed up with scarlet bales of worsted and long saddle-bags with great hanging tassels. A man on a fine mare rode up and began to dance with her, round and round, backwards and forwards, in an ambling way.

DANCING AT THE WEDDING FESTIVITIES.

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Suddenly he burst through the circle at a rapid gallop and brought the animal almost up on its haunches, then back to the crowd, over which the mare's heels scattered sand in showers. Guns went off rapidly one after another, the men firing in the air; and then the nodding figures representing the bride and groom returned to the little town, where the real happy pair were themselves waiting to go through the marriage ceremony. It was a pretty sight, and we saw some sweet faces amongst the children and young lads.

Here we were overtaken and joined by two poor Moslem pilgrims going from Egypt to Jerusalem, who were glad of our protection and the food which we could give them; and in return they assisted in packing the baggage, holding the mules, etc. We bought

TRAVELLERS WE MET IN THE DESERT.

a sheep and made a feast for our men and the pilgrims, who all sat down in the sand, under some wild fig trees (the sand here is blown in from the seashore, and evidently covers some good soil), with the fresh green of their young leaves sharply defined against the bright blue sky, and our dragoman advised that "we all make happy together." And so we did.

Here noble groves of palms rise against the exquisite blue sky. They help to support the natives, who value the dates, which they often pound together, and sell in this state to the Beduins who live far away in the desert. The natives also grow watermelons in the sand. We could see the blue Levant, but no shipping of any kind. Small vessels do, however, arrive now and again from Egypt and the North Syrian coast. There is in the town a little *suk*, or bazaar, of small importance, where barley can be purchased. Thus the traveller can get helped on his onward journey by forage for his animals and dates for himself.

The only part of this journey about the safety of which there is sometimes need for anxiety is in the district lying between El Arish and the first Turkish town of Khan Yunis. But the Governor of the former had told us that the country was quiet, and sent the Sheik of El Arish with us to show us the way, and to exercise the influence which he possesses in the neighbourhood in case of any difficulty arising.

This worthy man was well provided with warlike weapons, and rode upon a beautiful *naga*, or female dromedary, which he boasted had once carried him from El Arish to El Kantara on the Suez Canal in one day. He was much amused to see my husband treat me with politeness, handing to me water before drinking himself, etc., and was surprised on being informed that this was the English custom. I do not think, however, that he believed it, for he told our dragoman that it was evident that my husband was entirely governed by me, and that nothing would induce him to place himself in such a position towards a woman.

Soon after leaving El Arish we began to see signs of cultivation of the soil. Small patches of scant young barley, daffodils, and a few tiny iris flowers appeared in a gently undulating country, and camels were seen

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KHAN YUNIS.

ploughing, and larks heard singing melodiously in the air. Then again returned the bare sand, the scrub, and the high slopes of yellow hills cutting off the sea from view. In the distance we saw a small white dome, and passing a long inlet of the sea we came to the hamlet of Sheik es Zwoyed, with its few palm trees and humble Arab burial-place, and a broad green of short grass and yellow daisies on which we pitched our tents. From this place the cultivation increased, and camels and donkeys, sheep and goats became frequent. Two hours riding the next morning brought us to Raphia, where two old columns, doubtless the surviving pillars of some ancient building, standing near a solitary tree, mark the boundaries of Egypt and Turkey; and here I suppose the Holy Land proper begins, for the appearance suitable to a land of milk and honey becomes observable. Two hours more brought us to the first Turkish town, Khan Yunis, a very picturesque-looking place with palm trees and a fine old mosque, and a *khalat*, or castle, a long white building with circular towers, round which are wretched houses occupied by the soldiers.

Drenching rain had fallen on this day's march and wet us through, and for shelter and to dry ourselves we entered a small barrack-room where there was a good fire in a brazier, and a number of soldiers, some lying asleep and some talking. They treated us very politely, helping us to dry our saddles and saddle-bags and giving us coffee, in exchange for which we supplied them with cigarettes, much to their satisfaction.

Here we thought we should have to produce a passport and submit to examination of luggage; but no one questioned or troubled us, and the rain having ceased and the sunshine appeared, we proceeded on our way. At a little distance in the direction of the sea were groups of palm trees, and beyond lay a large pool or lagoon of brackish water, between which and the blue Mediterranean spread a long promontory of sand. Hundreds

DEIR EL BELAH.

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YOUNG MEN OF GAZA PLAYING CARDS.

of wild ducks frequented this sheet of water. Brilliant yellow sand-hills ran down to the sea, and we now entered the beautiful green plain of Philistia.

From Deir el Belah the country became much more fruitful, the plain rising gradually into higher and more undulating land. In the early morning light the young crops of barley and lentils shone resplendent with dew-drops. The wild flowers, especially the red anemones, were radiant, larks were singing in the air, and a few fleecy clouds floated over the scene. We now betook ourselves to the broad, sandy highway which leads at first through lanes of prickly pear by Wady Selga. This *wad* after heavy rains carried a stream of water to the sea. The wreathed and billowy forms of the pure sand-hills, intensely white under the midday sun, were exquisite in shape and contrast with sea and sky. Palm trees whose trunks were nearly covered by the sand showed their beautiful waving tops above it. There are a few little hamlets scattered about, of which the Terabin Arabs are the terror, stealing cattle, cutting down fruit trees, and punishing resistance with violence; but the soldiers in the garrison towns keep better order amongst them than they did formerly. Several hours more and we were in Gaza, where (having visited the place before) we only waited to lunch in the cemetery outside the town, and call on one of the British medical missionaries stationed here. Some idle apprentices playing at cards on a tombstone reminded us of Hogarth, and we took a photograph of them, while they cast contemptuous looks towards us.

Wherever digging goes on here, the remains of old buildings are found; and in order to get a foundation for the mission-house, it was found necessary to go down over fifty feet. I suppose that the shifting soil is composed of sand blown in from the seashore during many centuries, which has buried many old erections here, as at Askalon. Excavations at Gaza and Askalon would surely yield some valuable results. Some very fine Greek sculptures and statues have been found at the latter place by the natives.

From Gaza our way lay at first through pleasant olive groves. Narrow paths ascending brought us to high ground, which afforded distant views of a wide country green with the rich young crops lying under a cloud-sprinkled sky, with intense blue between the shadows, and in three hours more we came to the village of Bureir, which was as far as we could attain that day towards Tel el Hesy, the site which Dr. Flinders Petrie identified with Lachish, and which Dr. Bliss more fully excavated for the Palestine Exploration Fund.

We rode there the next morning. There was not much for the uninstructed eye to see amongst these ruins except trenches and pieces of pottery, and decayed sunburnt bricks and marks of fire. The flight of steps and portal of stone drawn by Dr. Petrie had been removed by the Arabs for building material. From the Tel we had a charming view of hilly country emerald with young corn, and in the distance the blue mountains of Judæa.

Anyone who happens to have read my husband's book, "With the Beduins," may remember the opinions of our friend and dragoman, George Mabbedy, about the stars. He recurred to the subject again on this journey. We tried by the aid of a candle, an orange, and a walnut to explain to him our Western notions of the sun, earth, and moon, and the revolutions of both the latter; but he could not at all understand the matter. The heavens were to him as a flat ceiling spread over the earth. We thought, however, that we had made a little progress with him one evening, for the next day he said he had not been able to sleep for thinking of the subject. But it appeared it was not the wonders of the celestial system which had kept him awake, but sad commiseration of our delusions.

He said: "That never come into my head. Stars are lamps for light earth. That what God says. People that write book of stars are poor, and want make little money to

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eat bread. One cannot believe such thing. Speak something else; I hear no more about stars." After a pause, hoping that we were convinced of our error, he resumed: "You still believe stars, or finish?" We said we still believed. Then, speaking more earnestly, he continued: "You must not believe. I tell you true. It is not so." As soon as we got to our camp that day he asked for the Bible, and triumphantly read aloud out of the first chapter of Genesis: "'He made the stars also.' You see, God made stars. It is not said worlds. Believe me, they are lamps." When we argued that, although the heavenly bodies were in the Bible called stars, that did not imply that they were not worlds, finding nothing immediately to reply, he said: "This not good chapter. I will read in Samuel or Judges of fight." He is very well acquainted with all the fighting parts of the Old Testament, which please him much, and some of them he read out aloud. We were in Samson's country, and his talk fell upon that mighty man.

"This Samson very strong man, but he was naughty. He tear lion and kill him. After, he find honey in carcass, and give his father and mother to eat, but he did not tell them where he find it. I wonder that they did not smell that it came from carcass." This question had not occurred to us before, but it is perhaps worthy of note.

Two or three days more and we reached Bethlehem, where George's wife and children came out to greet us with flowers in their hands, and the same day we rode past the walls of the Holy City, down into the valley of the Kedron, and up the northern slopes of Olivet, or the southern slope of Scopus (it is all one ridge, and no one knows where one ends or the other begins), to our own piece of land at Ras Abou Kharoub (the height of the father of Kharoub trees), where stands our Eastern home. Over the wall had been placed a board inscribed with the words, "Welcome Home!" above which hung an onion to avert the Evil Eye. The gun of salutation was fired off, and our workmen came running out to kiss our hands. It was delightfully patriarchal.

This is the highest point in the hills that stand about Jerusalem, 2,725 feet above the sea, and nearly 300 feet above the platform of the Haram or "Noble Sanctuary" where the Temple once stood, and the Dome of the Rock and Mosque of Aksa now stand. The north-east angle of the walls of Jerusalem points direct to this spot, so that from it the faces of the south and north wall are equally open to view. Then, looking eastward, we behold the mountains of Moab and the Dead Sea.

The dawn, the sunrise, the sunset, the after-glow, the moon-rise, the starry night—all are equally beautiful from this spot. But loveliest is the dawn. The first faint flush comes over the hills of Moab, and then the surface of the Dead Sea shows like an *aqua marina;* and turning to the Holy City, we see its domes and minarets stand out in the cold light, soon to be irradiated with the first rays of the sun. To the east stretches the wilderness of Judæa, solemn and bare; to the west, in this spring season, the young corn and the wild flowers, and the trees putting forth their leaves, seem to make the desert blossom as the rose.

SHEEP WAITING FOR THE WATER-DRAWERS.

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PELOTA

THE NATIONAL GAME OF THE BASQUES.

By HERBERT VIVIAN.*

NEVER in the history of peoples has any race given itself up to any game with such entire enthusiasm as the Basques devote to their national game of Pelota. There is scarcely a wall with anything of a courtyard in the remotest of their villages or the most dismal of their slums which is not seized upon at all hours for a "knock-up." Even at the entrance to Burgos Cathedral I found it had been necessary to put up a notice, in letters a foot long, forbidding the game against the sacred edifice. There is no village boy with the least claim to gumption but cherishes the dream that some day he may star it as a famous *pelotar*. Wherever the game has taken hold—at Madrid, San Sebastian, Barcelona, Buenos Ayres, Bilbao—its champion players are earning fortunes which rival those of the great matadors. They are more admired than the tenor in the latest comic opera or even a victorious general. It is the one career which may bring riches and glory to the humblest Basque, and his only passport to it lies in a quick eye and a strong arm. What wonder, then, that the enthusiasm should be so keen and so universal?

Photo by] [*A. Esplugas, Barcelona.*

CHIQUITO DE ABANDO TAKING A BACKHANDER.

A superficial observer may seek to dismiss Pelota as a mere form—or shall we say dialect?—of real tennis. But tennis has always remained an aristocratic game, whilst Pelota must always appeal to the masses also. The origin of both games is lost in antiquity. An expression of them was popular in ancient Greece, and a Basque will tell you that Adam and Eve played Pelota with the apple in Paradise! The modern game differs considerably from the older versions, which held their own well into the middle of last century. They were played more for honour and glory than anything else, by village against village and district against district, or, on grand occasions, nation against nation—that is, of course, between French and Spanish Basques. The ball was then struck with the hand, as in fives, but the modern game depends upon an instrument called a *cesta*, which may be described as a cross between a glove and a racket. You put your hand in and fasten the *cesta* as though it were a glove, but it is

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of strong basket-work, nearly three feet long, and it enables you to sling your *pelota* (ball) an enormous distance with the velocity of a bullet. All the best *cestas* are made by a man named Lacarra, at Ascain, and cost from £1 to £2 each. Another man, Sainz of Pamplona, has a similar corner in *pelotas*, which weigh over four ounces, and cost from thirty shillings upward. Ten balls are the usual quota for a game of fifty up.

I shall convey a better impression of Pelota by relating my experience of the first game I ever witnessed. It was at the Euskal Jai* at Madrid, one of the most famous covered courts in existence. As I entered, I seemed to encounter a regular pandemonium. Some twenty bookmakers were walking about at the edge of the court, and yelling with a vigour worthy of the silver ring at Newmarket; and every sound was reverberated a hundredfold. They were clad in the Basque *boina*—a blue tam-o'-shanter. Each held in his hand a kind of bloated cheque-book, and on each cheque were a number of blue and red bars, upon which a bet was inscribed according as it was for the Blues or the Reds. In old days you might back a village or a nation; now such distinctions are forgotten, and you are reduced to giving your support to a colour.

At the end of the court was a telegraph-board, on the same principle as those well known on cricket-fields. It contained two compartments, the one to the right for the insertion of a red number, and that to the left for a blue number. The game was four-handed—two Reds against two Blues. They were playing fifty up, and the game as I came in stood at "32 all." I was not expecting to be much interested, as I am always wearied when I have to watch a tennis or racket match. But I had not been in the Euskal Jai many minutes before my enthusiasm was vehemently aroused. The rallies were wonderful and interminable. It seemed as if those strange curved baskets could never miss the ball. Generally they would catch it on the volley, keep it poised in the hollow for a second, while they swept back to give a mighty cast, and then batter it against the great black wall in front. Often it would return the full seventy-eight yards to the back wall like a flash and defy further capture except by a miracle. But this miracle would be repeated so often and with such a sublime absence of effort that at last my amazement gave way under the strain of familiarity, and I began to fancy that it must be impossible to miss.

The Blues seemed to be the better players, but the Reds were the more fortunate, and the score crept up in their favour to "37–34." The bookmakers were now running about

Photo by] [*A. Esplugas, Barcelona.*

CHIQUITO DE ABANDO ABOUT TO SERVE.

like caged beasts, and shouted themselves hoarse. "Two to one on Red! I'll lay forty to twenty! A hundred to fifty, I'm giving—*giving—giving!*"

The rallies grew longer and longer, the excitement of the audience more and more intense. When a player missed a ball, he appeared to be overwhelmed by his fault,

* *Euskal Jai* (meaning Basque Festival) and Jai Alai (Joyful Festival) are the Basque names by which Pelota-courts are generally known.

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and would totter off to the side wall to hide his face against it. On one occasion, immense hilarity was caused when a player did this with such vehemence that he banged his nose very severely against the wall, and was forced to keep rubbing it during the next few rallies. The strain was now evidently telling upon all the players. Between each rally, chairs and tumblers of coloured liquid were brought to them by smart pages in uniform. Somehow, there was an impression of a prize-fight in the air—particularly when the combatants were solemnly fanned with towels.

When "48 all" was put up, the sensation was tremendous. I seemed to feel the pulses of the whole audience—four thousand pulses—beating in unison with one fierce throb. There was an intense hush of expectancy as the Blue server stepped forward to choose a fresh ball from the basket, which was held by a small boy wearing a scarlet *boina*. He tested it more carefully than usual against the ground, knowing how much was at stake. Then he tossed it to his forward adversary, who bounced it once or twice as a matter of form before returning it. The server took the usual run of about twelve yards, threw down the ball, and swept it up against the wall with his *cesta*. The Red forward caught it at the volley, swung back his arm, and gave a sweeping stroke which made the ball rebound right away to the back wall. It must be a difficult stroke for Blue, as it had landed almost in the angle of the wall and pavement, spurting out at him in the most unexpected manner. Ah-h! we all held our breath with one accord. Heigho! he had missed it. No, by Jove! What genius! He just contrived to rescue it as it was about to touch the ground a second time, and we could see it fairly on its way to the front wall.

A shout of horror went up. The ball had struck forward Blue in the head, and he fell at once like a ninepin! A dozen people were round him in a trice, and for some long moments he lay there an inert mass. Presently, however, we saw him being carried out pick-a-back, but he was as white as a sheet, and it was obvious that he would not play again that day.

The scorer marked up "49 to Red," and there was a buzz of wonder as to the fate of the bets. Red were still one short of the game, but on the other hand, Blue were unable to come up to time. Presently an official was seen proceeding across the court. He began to write in large letters on the side wall with a piece of chalk: "Owing to the indisposition of Brau, the game is suspended." Then followed the enigmatical legend "a 50%," which turned out to mean that the backers of Blue only lost half their stakes. It was a sad ending to a stirring exhibition of sport, this ominous writing on the wall; but the dramatic finish must have served to make the match ever memorable to many.

It must not be supposed that Pelota is really a very dangerous game. Certainly casualties are not infrequent, and the force with which the ball is struck sometimes makes them serious; but for the players it is certainly not more perilous than football, whatever it may be for the spectators. The chief danger, however, is not in being shot by a *pelota*, but in the effects of such violent exercise, and I am told that all but cast-iron constitutions run grave risk of lung diseases. However, the Basques are a race of athletes, and readily put up with a good deal in the interests of sport.

Another charge against the game is that, now it has become a regular profession, betting dominates everything, and players lose on purpose. But this is the common complaint of every enemy of sport all the world over, and I am convinced that it has been much exaggerated.

The importance of the game began early last century. So zealous were the Basques about it then that fourteen of them deserted from the army of the Rhine to hurry home for a match, and after winning it, contrived to rejoin their regiment in time to take part in the victory of Austerlitz. In the old days, before Pelota had become a profession, when none thought of anything but the honour and glory of the game, the clergy were frequent performers, and often attained to special distinction. The French clergy were ordered by their bishops to change their cassocks for blouses or jerkins, but in Spain they always played in their ordinary attire, merely tucking up their sleeves. The sight of their cassocks and shovel hats amid the white shirts and red or blue *boinas* added wonderful variety to the scene. Among the reverend *pelotaris* the most famous was the Curé Laba, who played at Bilbao in August, 1878, against the yet more renowned Chiquito de Eibar. It was a tremendous contest, which will never be forgotten in the annals of Pelota. The Curé was a huge, stout man with a short neck. Chiquito was just turned sixteen—a dainty pink and white boy with a girlish

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expression. In the end David beat Goliath, but only after a titanic struggle, when both collapsed on the floor of the court, mere inert masses, gasping for breath. As frequently happens at Pelota, their right hands had swollen up so badly that two men had to stamp upon them with their whole weight. This is the usual remedy, and although extremely painful, produces no evil effects. At the sound of the Angelus the players stopped and doffed their *boinas* to say a prayer, neglecting the ball with one accord, even although in the middle of a tempting stroke. It was to the victor in that great struggle (Chiquito) that Pelota owed the great rush of popularity which it now enjoys. The charm of his play lay in his indescribable versatility. At the beginning of a game he would generally occupy himself merely with studying his adversary's methods and thinking out a plan of attack, quite regardless of how far he might be left behind. Then, whenever he chose, he would set to work and win the game straight off. Never, surely, was any sportsman made the object of so much hero-worship. Wherever Chiquito went he was idolised, his name was on all men's—and, still more, on all women's—lips. His portrait was in every window, and with his fame great riches were at his feet. Being naturally delicate, however, he could not long endure the strain, and in August, 1886, just eight years after his great victory over the Curé Laba, he was beaten at San Sebastian by El Manco (the one-armed) after a contest almost as memorable as the former one.

El Manco presented a strange appearance and possessed a strange history. He was born in the utmost penury, and at the age of four fell downstairs, injuring his right arm so badly that it had to be amputated. When he grew up, his highest ideal was to make two *reals* (fivepence) a day; but this seemed far beyond his capacity, and he was constantly on the brink of starvation. Again and again he attempted suicide, but he was no more successful in this than in anything else. At last he secured his fivepence a day as a carter, and devoted his leisure moments, like everybody else, to Pelota. He soon found that his left-handed stroke baffled everybody. Good luck had at last set in, and he reached its very apex by defeating the invincible Chiquito de Eibar; but though now rich and famous, El Manco retained his simple ideas.

It would be easy to fill a volume with the exploits of the various heroes of Pelota. I will only mention one or two. Mardura

Photo by] [*A. Esplugas, Barcelona.*

OUTSIDE OF THE UNCOVERED PELOTA-COURT AT BARCELONA.

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(Choppy Sea), also called Bad Weather, Storm, Railway, etc., had as many ups and downs in his career as any other player. When a boy, he was addicted to somnambulism, and fell into his courtyard from the second floor, badly injuring his right arm, which afterwards earned him such triumphs. Later on, he took pneumonia, and actually received extreme unction, but recovered. Now he has broken down, after making a fortune. Of the players of the present day, the best known are Irun, Gogorza, and Chiquito de Abando, whose portrait I reproduce.

Many Basques lament the transformation from the old game to the new, but there has been a distinct gain in the way of scientific play; and modern Pelota is certainly more brilliant and better calculated to inspire the unlearned with enthusiasm than its predecessor. Formerly the rallies were short and decisive; now they generally last three or four minutes. Nor must we grudge their triumphs to the players. Like singers, actors, and bull-fighters, they owe their success to their superlative skill, and in a dull age it should be sufficient that they amuse.

OLD SONGS.

ADOWN the years they come to me
From out the crypts of time,
With half-forgotten melody
And faintly failing rhyme;
With here and there a broken chord,
A missing word or phrase,
But sweet as angel whispers are
The songs of bygone days.

A snatch of college drinking-song,
A verse of cradle-hymn,
A bar of tender serenade
Sung when the stars were dim;
The truant strains they come and go
Like sparks of smoky haze—
A tangle of sweet memories,
The songs of bygone days.

And as the measures float along
Like shadows o'er the sea,
Across the drifting bloom of years
Lost faces smile on me;
Eyes dimmed in death's eternal night
Meet mine in friendly gaze—
I kiss the marble lips that sang
Those songs of bygone days.

Old tunes touch hidden chords in hearts
Long mute with age or pain,
And give us for a fleeting space
Lost faith and hope again.
Within yon Cloudland's Far-away
Where swell the hymns of praise,
God grant the angels sometimes sing
The songs of bygone days!

SARA BEAUMONT KENNEDY.

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THE TRAIL OF THE DEAD:

THE STRANGE EXPERIENCE OF DR. ROBERT HARLAND.

By B. FLETCHER ROBINSON and J. MALCOLM FRASER.*

IV.—THE ANONYMOUS ARTICLE.

IN my narrative of the pursuit of Professor Rudolf Marnac, it will have been observed that Fortune had been cold to us. In the incident which I now relate we were to some extent more favoured; for though our supreme object was not achieved, we were yet enabled to save the life of her who is dearest to me in all the world.

I have told you of the homicidal mania which fell upon the Professor, and of the series of events which caused my cousin, Sir Henry Graden, the eminent scientist and explorer, to be associated with a Heidelberg student, as I then was, in an effort to contrive his capture. How we failed to bring about the murderer's arrest in Poland, through the stupidity of a forest guard, I have already explained. By the time I had obtained my release, Marnac had again disappeared. A linguist well provided with money, and on all points but one perfectly sane, had no difficulty in finding refuge in the cities of Europe.

I have been in some doubt as to the best means of briefly describing the present incident. Miss Mary Weston, with whom I discussed the matter, at once offered to place her diary at my disposal. Upon its perusal I suggested that she should herself extract the necessary items, adding such introduction and explanatory notes as seemed necessary. To this she has very kindly consented; and the first portion of this remarkable story I therefore leave in her hands.

Miss Mary Weston's Narrative.

It was in the winter of 1899 that my father's health began to fail. In the May of the following year I returned from my school near Paris, and instead of entering at Girton, as my father had previously arranged, I became his secretary. I was then just eighteen. I did the very best I could, and in his dear, kind way, he made me forget my miseries at the endless blunders I committed. You see, there were only we two; for my mother died shortly after I was born, and I was their only child. We saw few people at our little house, which was on the Trumpington Road, just outside Cambridge. Ladies I met would often pity me for the dull and lonely life I led, and that used to make me very angry. We were never dull or lonely, my dear father and I.

It may seem absurd that so distinguished a man as Dr. Weston, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S., the Regius Professor of Physic at Cambridge, should have relied on the help of a half-educated schoolgirl. But he was always pleased to say that my love and sympathy were worth far more to him in his work than if he had been served by the cleverest woman that ever headed an Honours list.

I well remember the appearance of Professor Marnac's book, "Science and Religion," which was published simultaneously in German and English at the beginning of the June of that year. My father was violently opposed to it, but I was far more concerned over the state into which it threw him than I was about the book, which, as a matter of fact, I never read. He dictated to me a most severe criticism, which at his instructions I sent to the editor of the *University Review* at 102A, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London. The article was signed "Cantab," a pseudonym that my father often used, as he had the greatest objection to publicity.

About ten days after the August *University* appeared—that being the number which contained his article—my father received an anonymous letter. It was my duty to open and sort his correspondence, and I was thus able to intercept it. It was addressed to "Cantab," and had been forwarded, unopened, by the editor of the review. The envelope bore a German stamp, but the post-mark had been smeared and was quite indistinguishable. The letter

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was neatly written in English. It consisted almost entirely of the most violent personal threats against my father. The writer declared that he would soon find out "Cantab's" real name, and would suitably repay him for his slanders against the greatest scientific work of the century. I was very frightened about it, but several friends to whom I showed the letter laughed away my fears, saying it was undoubtedly the work of some madman, and advising me to burn it. This I did. I never mentioned the affair to my father, whose health was giving me great anxiety at the time.

During September my father had taken a cottage on the Cornish coast, and when the end of the Long Vacation came, the doctors forbade his return to Cambridge. I had hard work to persuade him that it was best to obey their orders; but at last he gave in, and we settled down for the winter.

The cottage was built at the foot of a low hill strewn with boulders and torn by the autumn rains. Upon its summit the chimney of an abandoned tin-mine rose against the sky like a vast flag-pole, with roofless buildings grouped around it in melancholy decay. It was always a depressing spot to me, and I rarely visited it, though the view was splendid. About half a mile before the cottage the moorland ended abruptly in a line of glorious cliffs, two hundred and fifty feet of granite and shining porphyry from brow to breaker. This was my favourite walk. I loved to crawl to the edge, that I might peer over at the reefs that sprang out from the tumbled rocks at the cliff foot like the bones of a giant's hand. I have lain thus for hours watching the great rollers advancing in that stately, inexorable march of theirs, rank following rank, until they burst in thunderous green fountains of foam. Sometimes, when a fierce wind blew from the south-west, the spray they hurled into the air would wet my face, even where I lay so infinitely far above them.

Between the cottage and the cliff the ground dipped into a little glen, or goyal, as the country-folks called it, choked with storm-twisted trees and deep with gorse and ferns. Through it ran our cart-track, winding down to the fishing village of Polleven, where the tiny, stone-roofed houses clung to a gap in the cliff wall like barnacles on a rock.

Besides my father and myself, Marjory, our cook-housekeeper, who had been with us ever since I could remember, was the only other inhabitant of the cottage. On Tuesdays and Thursdays a red-cheeked maiden, who had quite remarkable powers of breaking crockery, came to help from Polleven.

So were we living on November 27. From that date I will chiefly rely upon my diary for the details of my terrible experience. Please do not laugh at the form in which I wrote it. Mr. Harland has asked me to make no alterations, and so here it is.

Friday, Nov. 27.—I have quite an important piece of news to-day, Mr. Diary. So no more grumbles, please, about your having sunk into a weather report. Yes, sir, I have met a stranger—fancy that—a visitor, in the winter, at Polleven!

Mr. Hermann—for that is his name—has been a dabbler in science, he tells me, all his life. I shall snare him before long and lay my spoil in triumph at father's feet. Since the weather has been so bad, it has been very lonely for him indoors, poor dear, with only ignorant me for company. I am certain Mr. Hermann will be just the man for him. A good stiff talk will brighten him up wonderfully.

I chanced upon him this afternoon. He was struggling along the cliff edge in the teeth of the wind. His age should be about sixty, but he is very well preserved. He is clean-shaved and close-cropped and is altogether very neat in his appearance. His eyes behind his glasses are absurdly young, if I can so describe them. They are so active and clear that if it were not for the wrinkles above them, I should have knocked ten years off his age. He asked me the way to Polleven, and as I was bound for the village, I took him in charge. On the way he told me that he had just taken a room at the inn there. He is writing a book, it seems, and wanted a quiet corner. He will find it at Polleven! He speaks with but a slight accent, having lived much in England, though his father was a German, as his name denotes. This was his first walk, and he seemed much impressed with the wildness of the scenery.

I told father about him at supper. He said he would be very pleased to meet him.

Saturday, Nov. 28.—I am filled with the triumph of success. Mr. Hermann and father are hard at it over their pipes in the study. They do not seem to be opposed on any big question, which is most lucky, for some very learned men get into dreadful tempers with each other when contradicted.

It is the butcher's day at Polleven, so I walked there this morning to give the orders.

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I met Mr. Hermann coming up from the quay. He is very fond of sailing, he said, and had engaged a small trawler and two

"So we stood watching each other."

men, so that he can have a good blow when the weather permits. He kept on rubbing his hands and beaming upon me, as if he had struck upon some new idea which pleased him. I told him I thought he had done a very sensible thing, and that in my opinion a great many clever men would write the better for a dose of fresh air taken daily. He laughed a good deal at this and complimented me on my wit. My wit! Think of that! As I knew there were plenty of chops in the house, I asked him to lunch, saying that my father, who was an invalid and could not go out much, would be delighted to make his acquaintance. He accepted at once and we walked back together.

Later. — Father says that Mr. Hermann is unusually well read, and that he had had a most interesting talk with him. Yet he did not seem very enthusiastic about him. I hope they did not quarrel. It rather spoilt my triumph. Father did not seem to have anything definite against him — only a general impression that he was a queer fellow. I think this rather absurd.

Sunday, Nov. 29. — Mr. Hermann sat behind me at church this morning. He sang the hymns in a high voice that would have been amusing under ordinary circumstances. After church he walked with me some distance up the hill. He condoled with me on my lonely

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life, and that always annoys me. Indeed, I am afraid I was rather rude to him about it. To make amends, I invited him to tea on Tuesday.

Monday, Nov. 30.—Father is not so well to-day. He has had more trouble with his cough, I fear, though he tries to make light of it. I wish I had not asked Mr. Hermann. I must take care that he does not see father to-morrow. The doctors were most particular in their instructions that nothing should over-excite him; I fear that the two might get into some silly argument.

Tuesday, Dec. 1.—Under this head my diary is a blank. I will try to set out the events of that day as calmly as I can. May God in His mercy help me, in His good time, to forget them!

My father seemed no worse in the morning, though by my persuasion he kept to his bed. His own room was on the ground floor—for he had been forbidden to climb stairs—and looked out upon the little garden at the back of the cottage.

Marjory had begged off for the afternoon, and I agreed, though this would leave me alone to serve my visitor. However, tea-making is no very difficult matter, and to pacify me Marjory had cooked one of her best cakes. She left shortly after two; Mr. Hermann arrived half an hour later.

I had not expected to see him so early, and was copying out some letters which my father had dictated, when he knocked at the door. As I showed him into the room, he chanced to pass the table on which they lay.

"What a beautiful hand your father writes!" he said politely.

"Thank you for the compliment, Mr. Hermann," I answered.

"My dear young lady, I am too old for riddles."

"The writing is mine."

"Is that really so?" he exclaimed, with a quick, startled look at me. "I could have guaranteed that it was a man's hand. Is there nothing private here—may I examine?"

"Oh, certainly," I said. "They are letters to tradesmen."

He picked up the sheets, and moving to the window examined them closely.

"You are sure this is your writing—there is no mistake?" he said presently.

I was rather annoyed at his persistence, and, telling him curtly enough that the writing was mine, went out to get the tea. At the kitchen door was the small boy who brought us our letters and papers from Polleven. There was only one letter that afternoon, which I placed amongst the tea-cups on the tray which I was carrying to the sitting-room. As I entered, Mr. Hermann stepped forward to help me.

"I fear I am giving you a great deal of trouble," said he.

"Please don't apologise," I answered, laughing. "I always do it when our servant is out."

"As she is now?"

"Yes."

"Then you have no one in the house?"

"No one—save my father."

"Indeed! Is that so?"

He dropped into a chair by the fire and sat staring into the coals, his chin resting on his hand. Certainly his behaviour was extremely odd that afternoon. As he did not speak, I opened the envelope, which was addressed to my father. It contained a second letter, and a short note from the editor of the *University*, stating that a person of the name of Sir Henry Graden had called for "Cantab's" address, and inquiring whether he might have permission to disclose it. He forwarded, he added, a letter from Sir Henry, which, as he believed, contained an explanation of this request.

I have the original letter before me now. This is how it runs:—

"Jerrold's Hotel,
"To 'Cantab.' "Strand, London, W.C.

"MY DEAR SIR,—As Mr. Rolles, the editor of the *University Review*, has not seen fit to inform me of your name and present address, I have written this letter on the understanding that it will be forwarded to you immediately. I should much have preferred to explain the matter personally, but as I may not receive your answer for several days, I dare not delay. It is my duty to inform you that Professor Rudolf Marnac, of the University of Heidelberg, is now a fugitive from the police. The charge against him is one of murder. I know that the man is guilty; I believe him to be the victim of a homicidal mania.

"His mania is of an unusual type, being directed solely against his scientific opponents. In the *University Review* of August last you criticised his book with extreme severity. He saw that number, for I have in my possession a copy of the article covered with the most dangerous threats against you in his own handwriting. Two distinguished scientists, Von Stockmar of Heidelberg, and Mechersky of St. Petersburg, who similarly attacked him in the papers, have already fallen victims to his extraordinary cunning.

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You will observe, sir, the logical conclusion. Until he is captured you will be in danger.

"For your personal information I may tell you that he is a man of over sixty years of age. When last seen he had a long beard which was of a silky white. He wears glasses, but his eyes are unusually keen and intelligent. His hands are small and beautifully made, his finger-nails being apparently manicured. In whatever disguise he may assume, he will probably continue to keep them in good condition. He may change his appearance in many ways; but if you are in doubt of any pleasant stranger, I beg you to note his hands.

"On the receipt of your answer I am prepared to come to you at once. I shall then be able to give you further particulars.

"I beg you not to disregard this warning, and until you see me to be most careful in your movements. Of course, if your pseudonym is an absolute secret, you will be safe enough. But there are always chances.

"Sincerely yours,

"HENRY GRADEN (Bart.)."

I glanced up cautiously. Mr. Hermann still sat huddled in his seat by the fire. One of his hands I could see clearly, for it lay upon the arm of his chair. It was small as a woman's, and the nails had received so fine a polish that they shone pinkly in the fire-light!

A wild terror clutched at my throat, so that for a space I sat dumb and motionless, gasping for breath. But then there came to me the realisation of the purpose for which this man had come, and at the thought of it my blood came surging back into alert activity. There may be many an English girl who loves her father as dearly as I do mine, but there is never one of them that loves him more. I can say honestly that after that first great shock of fear my mind was swept clean of my own danger. For my father I was ready to meet Death on his own ground, at his own terms, and try the issue.

And yet my first act was one of such folly that I can hardly bring myself to set it down. Perhaps it was that the words of the letter were rioting in my head; perhaps that my whole will was centred in an effort to control the tones of my voice.

"Do you take sugar in your tea, Professor Marnac?"

That was what I said to him.

It was out, and I could not recall it. As he rose, I sprang back, placing the table between us. A cup, caught by my skirt, smashed loudly on the floor. So we stood watching each other.

He showed no sign of anger. Only the expression of his eyes had changed to a cold, sneering insolence that was a most dreadful thing to see in so old a man.

"I observe, dear lady, that you hold a letter in your hand," said he, without a harsh note in his musical voice. "May I suggest that it contained the discovery which you so very incautiously have announced?"

"I shall answer no questions."

"If you will consider, dear lady, you will perceive that you merely waste time. Tell me—do you know the object of my visit?"

I hesitated a moment. Was there anything to be gained by pretending ignorance? None, so far as I could see.

"So I imagine," I replied.

"You relieve me of a load of explanations. There is, however, one point on which I myself desire information. Through the courtesy of the editor—or assistant editor—of that admirable periodical, the *University Review*, I was allowed a glimpse of the manuscript of an article signed 'Cantab.' It was a scurrilous effort, dictated by the meanest jealousy. It was designed to destroy my book—my book which is my life's work—do you understand?—my whole life's work."

His voice rose to his last words till it ended in a shriek of passion.

"Well, and what of that article?" I answered boldly.

My question calmed him in an instant. There was a crafty leer in his eyes as he spoke again.

"Of course, it was your father's. No sentence it contained was unworthy of so scholarly a pen. But why, dear lady, why was the original MSS. in your hand?"

"My father had nothing whatever to do with it," I said, speaking very slowly and distinctly. "I wrote it myself."

"You!" he cried, staring at me. "You wrote it?"

"Certainly. Do you think me incapable? If so, I direct your attention to the record of the Honours that I took at Cambridge."

If ever a lie be pardoned, may I not claim mercy for this of mine?

"Will you swear this to me?"

"Why not? I am not ashamed of my work."

He stood staring at the table in front of him for some moments, his hands pressed to his head.

"She must suffer, then," he muttered.

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"But if I had known! A girl—it was hardly worth the trouble."

"Don't you think you had better go back to your inn?" I suggested.

"Not until we have settled our little account together, dear lady. You are young, yet young vipers can sting. Is it not better at once to put an end to their powers of mischief?"

"Yet the young can run where the old cannot follow. I am nearer the door than you. At your first movement I shall be clear of the house."

"And leave your father as a hostage?"

His words struck me like a blow. I swayed forward, gripping the table with both hands. He could have seized me then if he had wished; but he knew I was in his power, and held away.

"Do not forget that, dear lady," he continued; "it must be either you or him. There is no way of escape for both, I am afraid."

I am writing down the facts as they occurred. I desire no credit for following my duty. What I did then, many thousands of girls would do to-day. For there remained no way out of the pit into which we had fallen—my father and I—save one, and that I accepted gladly, readily.

"Then take me," I said to him.

"You have sadly upset my little arrangements. I had not thought of so fair an offender. Let me see." He paused, softly rubbing his chin.

There was a cat-like gratification about the creature as he stood glancing at me from time to time, with a smile flickering on his thin lips; and all the while my soul was searching, searching for the way of escape that I could not find.

"On the whole, it is the happiest plan," he said suddenly, with a little sigh of relief. "Let us make a move to the front door."

The sun was dropping to the western sea in angry banks of cloud. His rays shone so strongly in our faces that I had to shade my eyes as he pointed out the manner in which death should come to me.

"You are a strong, brave girl," he said with a little bow, "or I would not suggest so novel a scheme. I shall sit here in the porch and watch you as you walk over the moor, down into the little valley, up again, and so to the cliff edge. After a time for suitable meditation—let us say two minutes—you will step off into eternity. Do not fear, it is an easy method of putting an end to an infinity of troubles.... Keep back! keep back, I say!"

He was an old man, and it was worth the effort. But as I sprang towards him, he whipped out a revolver from his pocket, and I shrank away from the black ring pointed at my chest.

"I shrank away from the black ring pointed at my chest."

"Such folly is not what I should have expected from Miss Weston," he continued. "Should you cause me to kill you, I shall certainly not spare your father. And why should two suffer for the fault of one?"

"How am I to know that even if I accept

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this that you offer, you will let him go unharmed ?" I cried.

"On my word of honour, I will not hurt a hair of his head."

"Your word of honour!"

"Do you doubt me, mademoiselle ?" he shouted, flaring up into another burst of passion. "I come of an honourable house, a house that served its kings in many wars before the Revolution destroyed us. I am no pig of a German ; I am a Marnac of Toulouse, mademoiselle, and we hold to our word though we are torn in pieces."

"But how can you, a gentleman, drive an innocent girl to so frightful a death ?" I pleaded with him.

"Innocent ? Did you not write that article ?" He spoke eagerly, with a glance of keen suspicion.

"Yes. I wrote it."

"Then go. Remember, I wait and I watch. If you fear to do this thing, yes, even if you hesitate too long over there upon the cliff edge, I shall kill your father."

Without another word I began to walk down the sloping moor towards the sea.

* * * * *

I have asked Miss Mary Weston to end her narrative at this point. I think it better that I should now take up the threads of the story.

After Marnac's escape from Poland, Sir Henry Graden and I travelled to Berlin. There we carefully examined the book of extracts which had come into our hands, and sent warning letters to those writers who from the marginal notes seemed to have especially roused this madman's anger against them. The extreme animosity which was evinced against "Cantab's" article in the *University Review* especially alarmed us for the author's safety. Finally we determined to proceed to London, discover his identity, and take the necessary steps for his safety. Distasteful as was this detective business to a man of my studious habits, I nevertheless felt that it was my duty to assist my cousin in hunting down the murderer.

It was on the evening of Sunday, November 29th, that we arrived at Charing Cross Station, from which we removed to the morose respectability of Jerrold's Hotel. At eleven on the following morning we were ushered by a buttony boy into the editorial sanctum of the *University Review*.

Mr. Rolles—for such we had discovered was the name of the editor—remained seated before his American roller-top desk. He was a very large and sleek young man, with plump cheeks of a dingy colour, and *pince-nez* glasses which he wore half-way down his nose. His general appearance was suggestive of a capacity for plum-duff and sugar-water, and he oozed self-appreciation from every pore.

"And what can I do for you ?" he inquired, with a sedate patronage.

"In the month of August," said my cousin, declining the chair that Mr. Rolles suggested, "you published an article signed 'Cantab,' dealing with a book written by Professor Marnac, of Heidelberg."

"Most certainly. Pray proceed."

"For the most urgent private reasons I desire 'Cantab's' name and address."

"Which I cannot give you," said Mr. Rolles, lighting a gold-tipped cigarette.

My cousin walked up to the editorial desk and spoke down upon him.

"From my card, sir, which I perceive you have before you, you can judge that I am a respectable person."

"Perhaps, perhaps," smiled Mr. Rolles ; "but nowadays even baronets, you know, are—well, not always worthy of such implicit confidence as you demand."

I saw the right hand of my cousin steal out towards the editorial collar, but he restrained himself.

"You reduce me, sir, to speak of myself with less good taste than modesty," he said. "Have you never heard of my name as an explorer or a scientist ?"

"Very often, my dear Sir Henry ; though even for so distinguished a light I cannot break my most sacred rule. If you choose to write to 'Cantab,' I will forward the letter. Further I cannot go."

I don't think that Mr. Rolles will ever realise how near he came to a thorough trouncing. For a moment my cousin, so to speak, hung in the wind. Then he drew up a chair and sat down at the corner of the desk.

"I will accept your offer, sir," said he. "Give me a blank sheet of paper."

The letter written, it was handed over to Mr. Rolles, who gave us his word that it should go by the next post. Then we retired into the street.

My cousin was simply unbearable that day. He was always impatient of delay ; but in all our wanderings together I have never suffered from him more acutely. He dragged me aimlessly about the streets, set me down to lunch at a comfortable restaurant, and then swept me off before the coffee arrived. I endeavoured to escape him, but

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the attempt was a hopeless failure. Five o'clock was striking when he turned his face eastward—he had been inquiring for letters at the Travellers', in Pall Mall—and, with his most unwilling companion trotting beside him, again advanced on Covent Garden, near which the office of the *University* was situated.

"I'm hanged if I can stand this suspense!" he explained. "Marnac has had five or six days' start of us, and anything may be happening. If that idiot Rolles still refuses the address, I will thrash him till he gives it up, and take the consequences."

He meant what he said—he always did—and I followed him, with unpleasant visions of a summons at Bow Street and caustic paragraphs in the evening papers.

But we were in luck. Mr. Rolles had retired to the Athenæum for his tea, and in the assistant editor, who received us, I recognised an old acquaintance. He was a clever young Scot named Raeburn, who had lived on my staircase at Cambridge, and rowed bow to my two in the college eight. He appeared delighted to see me, and became duly impressed when I introduced him to my distinguished cousin.

"Is there anything I can do for you?" he asked me, after a few minutes of the conversation usual in such circumstances.

Evidently he had no knowledge of our previous visit.

"Sir Henry here is anxious for the name and address of 'Cantab.' You will recollect the man I mean; he contributed an article to your August number."

"Well, it's against all the rules; but, of course, with you it doesn't matter. He is Dr. Weston, the Regius Professor of Physic at Cambridge. The old gentleman has been very seedy, I hear, and is down at Polleven, on the Cornish coast, for the winter. That article seems to have attracted a lot of attention. I had an old fellow here kicking up a fuss about it less than a week ago."

"What did he want to know?" broke in Graden sharply.

"It was a long rigmarole of a story, but it boiled down to this: that we were charged with hopelessly misprinting Dr. Weston's MSS. To get rid of the old boy, I sent up for the original copy of the article and showed it to him. He went away quite satisfied after that."

"Did he mention Dr. Weston's name?"

"No. That is—I——"

"Did you?"

"Yes, I believe I did. But I took it that he knew it already. Hallo! Anything wrong?"

Raeburn has since admitted his doubts as to our sanity; for without another word my cousin rushed from the room, and I followed at his heels.

From the *Review* office to our hotel was no great distance, and this we ran, regardless of the indignation of jostled wayfarers. My cousin plunged into the smoking-room and seized a Bradshaw. I looked over his shoulder with an equal excitement. The next express from Paddington was at midnight, and it was timed to arrive at the nearest station to Polleven that the map showed us by twelve-thirty the following morning. But that village itself was distant by road a good fifteen miles from the station. With Cornish hills we should be lucky if we arrived there by three in the afternoon. The Postal Guide informed us that our letter of warning would be delivered about twelve o'clock next day. A telegram—for there was no wire to Polleven—would scarcely arrive earlier. There was nothing more to be done.

It was, indeed, shortly before three o'clock that our carriage groaned and screeched its way down the steep descent into Polleven village. At the inn we soon discovered the direction of Dr. Weston's cottage, and taking the advice of the landlord as to the roughness of the track thither, we left our carriage and started off on foot. After a stiff climb of three-quarters of a mile between rugged cart-ruts running with water from the winter springs, we emerged into a little glen, sparsely wooded. At the further end, built on the higher ground, we caught a momentary glimpse of a building which we took to be the place we sought. From our right, low, booming reverberations told of distant breakers on a rock-bound coast.

It was I who first saw her, a glimpse of white amongst the bare skeletons of the stunted trees. Then at the turn of the path we met her. Her face was pale as fine linen, her eyes fixed and glassy, her arms with her clenched hands rigid by her sides. She might have been the ghost of some great lady who had died by cruel wrong. So blindly did she walk that I believe she would have passed us if Graden had not sprung forward and barred her way.

She woke as a sleep-walker wakes, with a shuddering surprise. "Who are you?" she asked faintly. If she had not grasped the branch of a tree, I think she would have fallen.

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"'Who are you?' she asked faintly."

"Are you a relation of Dr. Weston's?" asked Graden very softly and kindly.

"His daughter."

"And you go?"

"To kill myself. Oh, no!" she burst out as we sprang forward. "It is no good! You cannot help me. The devil sits in the porch, waiting and watching. If I delay, he will kill—my father—my poor old father, who is so ill! Let me go—to the cliff—let me go, I say!"

Graden slipped his arm round her waist, and from his great height looked down at her with those honest blue eyes of his that made every child his friend at once.

"I am old enough to be your father, dear," he said. "You can trust me, can't you? Yes, yes, I knew it. Now tell me—what have you to do?"

"He is waiting in the porch," she answered him. "If he doesn't see me throw myself over the cliffs, he will kill father."

"Could he see us coming by the path which brought you here?"

"Oh, yes; above this glen it is open moor right up to the cottage."

"Is there a way to the back of the house?"

"Yes; but there is no time."

"That is foolish talk. Come, tell me."

"About two hundred yards back on the track you followed here there is a little spring amongst the rushes. There is a path, a short cut which the boys from the village sometimes take that leads into the clump of firs by the garden wall. The wall is quite low—and then—oh! then—you could get straight into father's room. It is on the ground floor; the room on the left as you open the back door. You could lock the door and defy the other man."

"Now listen to me, dear," said Graden. "You must walk on very, very slowly. Take all the time you can. At the cliff top make several starts as if you would jump, but feared. Mind that you do not go too near the edge. And so in ten minutes come home. We will meet you, and all will be well—at least, for your father," he added grimly.

"I understand," she answered simply, and walked on.

It was a wild rush that we made. We found the spring, and turning to our right

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crashed into the thicket—for the "path" was a courtesy title. The hanging scrub brushed our faces, in the open patches the dead gorse dug its spines into our knees. We quickened our pace in the more open fir-wood, vaulted the four-foot wall of the little garden, and, panting like exhausted hounds, ran furiously upon the house. There was no time for dodging and crawling. It was a forlorn hope we led.

And Dr. Weston was alive.

He sat amongst his pillows, a great book upon his knees, gazing over his spectacles with the most profound amazement on his kindly old face at the two dishevelled strangers who burst in upon him. Leaving me to guard and quiet him—for, indeed, the shock might prove most dangerous—Graden dashed out on his errand of vengeance. Two minutes later I heard him call, and breaking off the excuses that I was inventing, I ran through the house to join him.

Miss Weston and he were standing before the porch—alone. She was leaning on his arm, panting from great exertion.

"Think of it, Robert!" cried my cousin. "He chased her—the devil followed and chased her!"

"How is my father?" she faltered. "Is he—as this gentleman says—quite unharmed?"

"Quite safe, I assure you," I answered.

"I must go to him."

"One moment, Miss Weston," said my cousin. "We have yet a duty to the public safety. Which way has the man run?"

She told her story quickly. After she had left us and gained the cliff turf above the glen, she glanced back. To her surprise, she caught a glimpse of him standing amongst the trees on the opposite slope. Her delay had aroused his suspicions, and he had followed her. She walked slowly forward and, as we had directed, moved uneasily about on the verge of the precipice. Presently she again glanced over her shoulder. He had now crossed the glen and was standing in the open watching her. The distance between them was about two hundred yards. She knew that we must have nearly reached the cottage, and that if he had not already attacked her father. there was no further danger. So she started to run along the coast. He shouted and drew his revolver; but either he thought the distance too great, or he feared the noise of the report, for he did not fire. But her action evidently puzzled him, seeing that it left her father completely at his mercy. He did not pursue her far, but instead turned and gazed intently at the cottage. On her part, she also stopped running to watch him. From where they stood the garden was fully exposed, and at that moment our forms appeared as we vaulted the low wall. At which sight, Miss Weston said, he gave a most horrible scream, shaking his fists towards us and filling the air with imprecations. Then, without further noticing her, he set off towards the town. For herself, she came back as fast as she could run, meeting Graden before the door. She added some useful particulars as to his alias and his residence at the inn.

And so, her story ended, the brave girl passed into the house, while we dashed away in pursuit. My cousin stuck to his work most manfully; but age will tell, and I was a minute to the good when I stumbled into the parlour of the inn. They had not seen Mr. Hermann, they told me, since lunch-time; perhaps he was down at his boat.

"Boat—what boat?" I gasped.

"Why, zur," said the landlord's wife, grinning at my eagerness, "the guid gentleman be mighty vond o' zailing, an' he hath hired Mark Pennyfold's noo trawler, the *Agnes Jane*, for a matter o' two months. And now I comes to think on it, I did hear Mark zay as how he an' his zun were going out with Maister Hermann betwixt dree an' vour o'clock."

I ran down the narrow street towards the quay, between the quaint old cottages, with their fish stretched out to dry, and their nets, fishing-boots, and gear tumbled before the door-sills. As I reached the little breakwater, the sun, low on the west horizon, was throwing great golden streamers through gaps in the purple clouds that were piled as high as if a cataclysm of Nature had set the Andes on the Himalayas. From their feet came gusts of wind, fierce and icy cold. Even to my shore-going eyes it threatened dirty weather.

But I had no time for cloud effects. There, fair in the glittering path that the sun had daubed upon the waters, a red-sailed fishing-boat was running close-hauled to the sou'-westward.

"What boat is that?" I asked a lad who lounged against a mooring-post at my elbow.

"That, maister—whoi, it be Mark Pennyfold's *Agnes Jane*, 'er as was 'ired by the stranger from Lunnon, 'Ermann by name."

A hand fell on my shoulder. It was Graden's. He had heard and understood. And so we two stood together watching the red sails fade slowly into the gathering haze of the night and the storm.

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A CONTINENT IN SPOONS:

A TRIP THROUGH THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA PICTURED BY SOUVENIR SPOONS FROM THE PRINCIPAL TOWNS.

By C. Lang Neil.

Illustrated from Photographs of a collection in the possession of Mr. Charles Bertram.

ALMOST daily we see evidences of the collecting mania—one of the most prominent features of the times in which we live, and among the newest forms which it takes must be reckoned the spoon-collecting craze. Resembling so many other of our modern hobbies in that it hails from our American cousins, and having many points which strongly recommend it, souvenir spoon-collecting is as yet in its infancy on this side of the Atlantic.

Of course, no form of collecting is entirely free from expense, yet this particular one can, upon the whole, be recommended on the score of cheapness, seeing that its most ardent devotee will never be asked so large sums, for even the very choicest of specimens, as he would be for postage-stamps, butterflies, eggs, or other kindred treasures.

Spoons are easily kept; time does not impair their value, beauty, or interest. Even their intrinsic worth varies but little, for souvenir spoons are almost always manufactured from silver — engraved, gilded, or enamelled.

As has been said, the idea of spoon-collecting originated in the United States, and almost every town in that country produces a goodly assortment of patterned spoons, while enterprising clerks or bar-tenders in the majority of hotels of standing do a small private trade in them among the hotels' patrons.

Ask the manager of any hotel in London frequented by Americans, and he will bear witness to the fact that his visitors frequently inquire for spoons to take back to their own country. These not always being obtainable,

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it is no uncommon thing to hear of their asking whether they cannot purchase one of the ordinary hotel spoons, with a name or crest upon it, in lieu of a specially designed souvenir. Many hotel managers are not unnaturally averse to parting with their plate in this way. This has been known to lead to regrettable occurrences, as the veracious historian—though he would fain close his eyes to the fact—is compelled to admit that that form of surreptitious "borrowing" which is known to affect the collectors of books, china, and other *bric-à-brac*, has not entirely ignored the spoon enthusiast, who occasionally is unable to refrain from adding

LEXINGTON. CHICAGO. INDIANAPOLIS. NASHVILLE.

COLUMBUS. ROCHESTER. TOLEDO.

even forbidden fruit to his store. Indeed, strange though it seems, the writer has it as a positive fact from a certain London hotel-keeper that he has a stock of special cheap spoons for use during the American season.

In most large Continental cities good typical specimens are already to be obtained, and in this country the idea is rapidly on the increase, the better-class jewellers in many of our leading towns keeping a very creditable stock, while India, China, and Japan all supply the collector with many charming varieties.

The chief *desideratum* in souvenir spoons is not, as might be supposed, rarity, but excellence in design and ornamentation, together with typicality of the town or district which they represent.

Mr. Charles Bertram, the celebrated sleight-of-hand entertainer, whilst touring in the United States and Canada, became bitten with the spoon-collecting hobby, and brought home a fine collection which he has kindly allowed the writer to utilise as illustrations for the benefit of readers of the WINDSOR MAGAZINE.

A glance through these will show what degree of perfection is attained. Their cost varies from two to ten dollars apiece, but in Europe it is much less, the best specimens usually being obtainable for about twelve shillings.

Some twelve of our illustrations deal with souvenirs from New York and the neighbouring States, and the handle of each shows, in one form or another, the golden grain. Some years back a ballot of American Sunday-school children was taken for the purpose of choosing a favourite flower as an emblem, and the golden grain received an almost unanimous vote.

The first illustration is that of a spoon from Hartford, the home of two of the—to Englishmen—best known American authors, Mark Twain and Harriet Beecher Stowe. It

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NKW AMSTERDAM (ALBANY). CLEVELAND. BRIDGEPORT. OGDENSBURG.

PENNSYLVANIA. WASHINGTON. SPRINGFIELD.

is, however, too severe to be returned one of the gems of the collection.

The building depicted on the Worcester spoon (No. 2) is the great hall of that town; the bowl of the Cornell souvenir shows the library of the University.

Troy is represented by a specimen of singular beauty. The golden grain stands out from a white background on the exquisitely enamelled handle, whilst the gilt hollow is engraved with a picture of the monument erected to those brave soldiers who fell in the Civil War.

Apart from the dainty elegance of its

UTICA. CINCINNATI. MEMPHIS. ST. LOUIS.

NEW YORK. NEW ORLEANS. MILWAUKEE. PHILADELPHIA.

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tapering handle and the embossed portrait of the famous bridge, the Brooklyn spoon is of great value and likely to become rarer owing to the merging of that town with New York City.

The sixth comes from Orange, in New Jersey. This place bears the unenviable distinction of being the home of the mosquito, hence the decoration on the bowl of the Orange spoon.

The seventh and last spoon of the golden grain series is that of New Britain, a picture of the famous Normal School building filling its hollow.

ST. PAUL. TRENTON.

MINNEAPOLIS. RICHMOND.

That the decorative quality of the spoons is in no sense dependent upon the towns from which they come, is evident from seeing that one of the smaller and less ornamental specimens represents Chicago, that home of business enterprise. The Indian's head which adorns the end of the handle serves to remind one that in its early days the city we now associate with all the products of the most advanced civilisation was the scene of alternate massacres of the Indians and the fast encroaching Pale-face.

Toledo, in Ohio, is very proud of its magnificent court-house, and it is a presentment of this which decorates the token from that place.

The fantastically shaped handle to the spoon from Nashville, the principal town in the State of Tennessee, is beautified by a finely executed representation of the Capitol.

We now come to a series of seven which are without doubt among the best in the collection (Nos. 15–21). Of these the first comes from Albany, the capital of New York State. Albany is here alluded to as "New Amsterdam," and the handle of the spoon shown in the accompanying illustration presents a picturesque Dutchman smoking his long pipe. The Capitol, which adorns the bowl, cost no less than a million pounds, and the court-house and town buildings were erected for some four millions!

No. 16 is of a different type to our former specimens in that it represents not a city, but the State of Pennsylvania—Pennsylvania, the cradle of America's liberty, founded and governed by that great English Quaker, William Penn. The handle bears an embossed design of the Cracked Bell of Liberty, which formerly hung in the tower of the Independence Hall, the Hall itself being shown in the bowl of the spoon.

The subject of our next illustration has its origin in Cleveland, Ohio, a city founded in 1796 by General Morris Cleveland. On the assassination of President Garfield, who was shot on the platform of Washington railway station, his remains were conveyed to Cleveland for interment, and a monument, known as the Garfield Memorial, erected to his memory. And it is this monument

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which we see embossed in the handsome Cleveland spoon.

The next specimen hails from Washington, and, as might be anticipated, bears representations of the famous Capitol and White House.

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Bridgeport, Connecticut, is next on our list. The place of birth and headquarters of Phineas T. Barnum, its souvenir is decorated with a raised portrait of the great showman, who in his native place is remembered first and foremost as philanthropist.

That Springfield is the arsenal and rifle factory of the United States, its spoon plainly shows. Its capacity for turning out munitions of war may be gauged from the fact that during the Civil War the town was responsible for 800,000 guns. It is interesting to note that it was the sight of the Springfield Arsenal which called forth from Longfellow the well-known lines :—

Were half the power that fills the world with terror,
Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no need of arsenals nor forts.

Ogdensburg, the maple city, and first town over the border from Canada, has the leaves of its principal tree carved on the handle of its spoon, with a view of the city in relief on the bowl.

Utica has a very small spoon, with the city arms exquisitely enamelled on the handle, while that of New York, which comes next, is perhaps the plainest of all, and bears out the theory that the most important towns generally happen to possess the less ambitious souvenirs.

The specimen from Cincinnati, again, is very plain, but that representing New Orleans possesses the finest handle in the whole collection. A nigger's head, the mouth biting into a slice of melon, and a girl carrying a basket of cotton-seed upon her head, are worked out in brilliant colours.

Memphis, only divided from New Orleans by a canal, possesses a spoon which, for its delicacy and beauty, rivals that of the twin city, a bale of cotton being the most notable object. Milwaukee, the lager-beer town, and Philadelphia contribute to the collection spoons of a less pretentious character, but that from St. Louis possesses a unique handle-top in the form of a lily-of-the-valley.

The next five are chiefly noticeable for their bulk. Trenton has a handle of a very ordinary pattern, but possesses a well-engraved representation of the battle monument, the original of which is 150 ft. high, and was erected at a cost of over £100,000. The name "Richmond" stands out boldly on the handle of its spoon, which, except in this respect, is not a particularly distinguished specimen. The souvenir from St. Paul, Minnesota, without bearing any very characteristic design, yet gives a well-finished combination of embossing and engraving.

Minneapolis, appropriately enough, has its representation engraved with a picture of the far-famed Minnehaha Falls, while Schenectady, one of the most unprogressive towns in the States, though the birthplace of Edison, sends a spoon of extreme severity.

A daisy pattern handle and a bowl engraved with "An Old Kentucky Homestead" represents Louisville, the home of the coon song, which has recently had such a vogue in this country.

Burlington, Vermont, contributes a severe spoon, innocent of even the smallest emblematic decoration. The town is one of the centres of the Liquor Prohibition Act, no store being allowed to sell any alcoholic liquors. Burlington is a favourite town for tourists, owing to the magnificent view which it affords of the Adirondack Mountains, visitors being willing to pay even the taxes —which positively extend to being taxed for one's very watch and chain—rather than miss so striking a prospect.

Baltimore, the Grimsby and Whitstable of America, has a thoroughly typical souvenir, the bowl being fashioned in the form of an oyster-shell, and the handle of a fishing-rod, with fishes hanging from it. A Star of Bethlehem handle and the Washington Rock in its hollow adorns the spoon from Plainfield.

New Haven, Connecticut, boasts a curious spoon, with a motto setting forth the fact that this spot was chosen by the Pilgrim Fathers for the establishment of their first church in their new land of religious freedom.

It is always gratifying to the Briton to find his country to the fore in any sphere, and it is therefore with considerable pleasure that we find that the very pick of Mr. Bertram's interesting collection comes from a Canadian town. Montreal is responsible for a souvenir which must be awarded the palm, as much for elegance as for finish of detail. The bowl, of a somewhat singular shape, contains a picture of the Cathedral, while the handle bears in enamel the arms of the city.

Quebec—half French, half English—takes a toboggan as its emblem, while Kingston—owing to its cadet college, a centre of sport —utilises a lacrosse racquet and ball.

Ottawa, still following the principle of a plain spoon for an important town, has the smallest of the Canadian set, containing a fine engraving of the Parliament Houses and the royal arms on its handle.

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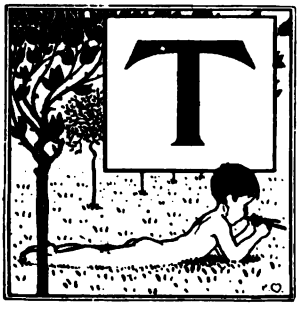
STRONG MAC.

By S. R. CROCKETT.*

SYNOPSIS OF FOREGOING CHAPTERS.—The story opened in the schoolhouse of Lowran, where a great noise was proceeding from the young men's bench. The Ploughing Match Day had been a holiday since the beginning of time; but Donald Gracie, the schoolmaster, had on this occasion denied the request of his scholars. The riot provoked the Dominie into striking the biggest youth in the school, Muckle Sandy, who retorted by knocking the schoolmaster down. Dora Gracie, the schoolmaster's daughter, with the aid of "Strong Mac," one of the bigger boys, proceeded to teach the school, after sending the Dominie to bed. The Dominie himself comes of distinguished stock, but has fallen on evil days through his fatal craving for drink. Strong Mac wins the "Single-handed" cup in the ploughing match, but in the hour of his success over Muckle Sandy remembers his promise to help Adora Gracie "keep school." The second instalment ended with the sudden alarm of Charlotte Webster, in love with Strong Mac, lest in her pique at his preference for Adora Gracie she has betrayed him as a poacher into the hands of the Laird's gamekeepers. The real fact, however, was that an incriminating pheasant in Mac's bag had been taken from his shoulders by a boyish devotee of Mac's, known as Daid the Deil, who was wounded by a shot from the keeper's gun, Strong Mac himself being released as blameless. The injury to the boy fired Sharon McCulloch, the father of Mac, a dour enemy of the great landlord from reasons of ancient wrong, to establish afresh a right of way "to kirk and market" through recently locked gates and barricades on the Laird's estate, and the close of the third instalment showed the old man and his sons winning through with their axes under the very eye of their ancient enemy.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE NEW WORLD OF LOWRAN.



THE campaign which opened by the historic clearance of the Bennan-brack road raged with various fortunes for three years. Not always were the McCullochs so successful, yet on the whole the victory lay with them. And for this reason. Among their numerous enemies was no cohesion, while the McCullochs stood shoulder to shoulder year in and year out.

Moreover, they had sympathisers. Herds on the hills both near and far, and especially herds' wives, favoured them with information, counsel, shelter, food. Even the ordinary game-watcher, paid his week's wage (but strictly as a hireling), found it to his profit to turn his back and saunter over a knowe, if he saw the House of Muir lads at work about an animal, which might of course be a braxy sheep, but again might be one of his master's deer. Often the merest glint of Sharon's tall gaunt figure defined against the sky-line has decided one of Jonathan Grier's underlings to remember a sudden call of duty in an opposite direction.

Then, in the black and arid winter, perhaps on the verge of some storm, which would prevent the ill-affected and tale-bearing from circulating much among the mountains, Sharon or Roy would say (casually enough) to a herd who had showed himself complaisant—aye, it is whispered, even to some of the game-watchers themselves on lonely stations: "Gae up the glen till ye see twa sticks stelled in a V—then haud ower the knowe to the richt a maitter o' thretty yards—turn ower some pulled heather—an' if ye dinna see something that ye never saw afore, come back an' tell me!"

And that night the beef-tub in the little cot on the hills would hold venison, and that cottier's tow-headed children might be seen running about for several days with a trickle of gravy browning the wicks of their mouths.

At House of Muir, Sharon and Roy were alone most of the time now, for Jamie had gone to Drumfern to serve his time in a lawyer's office, and though he came back every Saturday and spent the Sabbath (between the two "takkin's o' the Buik") in ways not particularly law-abiding, he could not be said to belong to the House.

It was by his own will that James had thus departed, and the agreement drawn up as to his expenses in Drumfern showed that he had not mistaken his profession. This document provided that until James repaid the advances which his father had made to him during his apprenticeship to Writer Greg, his brother Roy should be considered sole heir to the property of House of Muir. Furthermore, if his father advanced his elder son money to establish him in business

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for himself, Roy's ownership was to become absolute. Besides which, it was provided that James McCulloch was at all times to give his legal services free of charge ("expenses only") to his father and brother.

On Sharon himself little change had passed. His tussock of grey hair might be thought more heron-plumed, his shoulder-blades a trifle more like ploughshares, but the muscles on his lean wrist stood out more like whip-cords than ever. Years had not dimmed the blue glint of his eyes, straight as steel, cold as ice, and he fronted the world as defiantly and perhaps a trifle more humorously than before.

Roy McCulloch at twenty-one had filled out to the fulness of his early promise. He was not tall, but his figure was so beautifully proportioned that only the great muscles swelling under the smooth white skin and the easy inevitableness of his every action revealed the latent force which lay beneath. "Strong Mac" he had been even as a boy, but now they said (and were believed) that there were no five men in the county who would care to tackle Roy McCulloch in open combat.

There was about him still the old air of languid good-nature, that lazy challenge of eye which at once charmed and irritated women, and upon occasion a quiet resistless ease of action wholly different from his father's fierce volcanic energy.

In love—much talked of in these parts—Roy was still unattached, though ever and anon the talk of his friendship with the Dominie's Dora would take to itself fresh wings, after he had been seen swinging down the village street of Lowran, turning sharply to the left, and so up the little schoolhouse loaning.

But then Roy McCulloch always chose the time when most folk could see him. The loungers on the bridge, elbows on the parapet, smoking their evening pipe, joked him sedately as he passed. The quoits were ringing keenly on the village green; the good gossips were out on their doorsteps with stockings and white seams, and they too greeted him with passing pleasantries, as tongues feminine ran well-oiled to the click of the needles and the biting of threads.

So no one believed very much in the report which they themselves passed on. Roy McCulloch went to see his old master; the two were held great cronies. As to other possibilities—well, Adora Gracie was a winsome lass. There was no saying but behaviour less like that of Lowran lovers could not well be.

And Adora herself? Ah! come into the little schoolhouse, and you will see what three years have done for her! Sixteen to nineteen—from the Old World to the New! And over this dividing ocean each daughter of Eve must be her own Columbus.

Adora Gracie had not grown up according to pattern. She was gipsy-dark in a world of girls lily-white, flour-white, freckled-white. Never a freckle was there on Adora's clean even tan; yet healthy colour throbbed upon occasion on her dusk cheek. Perennial geranium glowed upon her lips. Her eyes were dark and fiery at once, the pupils large and mysterious, with a sense of tears unshed behind them, alternately mirthfully defiant and provokingly scornful—eyes that could prick the bladder of conceit like bayonets, and yet draw as with cart-ropes the prisoners of Adora's sword and bow.

Yet she had no such general reputation for surpassing beauty such as was Charlotte Webster's. Three men out of four would have preferred Charlotte, but the fourth would have flown at the throats of the others for a word breathed against Adora. There was a certain reserve, rare in such generous and gracious natures, a ready wit, a mellow afternoon charm about the Dominie's lass, that made her older than her years, and drew after her, not the usual herd of young night-runners, but rather men somewhat tried and experienced, grave and gay after their kind. They came to see the Dominie. Of course they were all interested in the Dominie! And so the best talk of the neighbourhood was to be heard in the kitchen-place of the little schoolhouse in the wood.

Yet for a certain reason Adora Gracie had few declared suitors. Charlotte Webster had them in strings and shoals, and took credit therefor; but Adora Gracie possessed the art to see into a man's feelings some way ahead of himself, and, as Jock Fairish said, "she keepit a bucket-fu' o' cauld water on the shelf—in case!" And Jock had some cause to know. He generally proposed to her—or, at least, made up his mind to do so—every Friday night.

By far the richest and most determined of all Adora's lovers, and the one whom, in popular estimation, she must end by taking, was Sandy Ewan, the Muckle Sandy of the Lowran Ploughing Match. He was now his father's successor. He had several

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"'But,' said Adora, 'have you thought at all of me in the matter?'"

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farms of his own, a house which rumour affirmed was being furnished to Adora's taste; while as horse-dealer and cattle-factor he had few equals and no superior. With such advantages a man would go far, and it was the opinion of Lowran that, "gin Sandy Ewan wanted a woman, he wad get her at the hinder-end."

Lowran had watched many generations of stand-offish and head-tossing parish belles who ended thus—marrying not the men they liked best, but the most persistent, the men who wearied them the longest with their much asking. The knowledge that there is an alternative constantly open to her, a place at a table-head which may be her own at any moment, money to spend, a recognised position ready to be claimed, has its effect upon the mind of any woman—in time, that is—aye, in time. Such was the philosophy of Lowran, and the experience of the past had given it some reason for so thinking.

Had not Tib Lonnen, that tearing beauty of the Directory days, ended by throwing over all the bucks of the time and marrying old Kissock of Birkenshaw, over fifty, snuffy, and badger grey? Did not Effie Hill sit in Girdenwood pew in Lowran Kirk, having migrated from that of Hunterston, just across the aisle? Her two husbands, Girdenwood and Hunterston—both deceased—had been old men, with heavy "stocking-feet." And so now the parish looks on a little cynically, till Effie Hill, late of Hunterston, later still of Girdenwood, throws her handkerchief on the third essay. The general opinion is that this time she will take a young man who will considerably lighten the "stocking-feet" of the deceased.

* * * * *

But the schoolhouse and its mistress are waiting, and must wait no longer. Donald Gracie, also three years older, sat by the window, a book on his knee. He was thinner than of old. His hair was scantier, and there was a fine gentle pallor about him which was very becoming. His hand, white and delicate, held the book listlessly, a finger in the place. But there was a carefully tended look about the Dominie, very different from what the older folk of the village remembered of him in the days before Adora had established her authority. Most people said that the Dominie had wholly cast aside his ancient failings. But a few who knew the symptoms shook their heads in private, or wound their watches in meditative silence when their wives questioned them about the matter as they were going to bed. All the same, he was undeniably "weel-put-on," and Adora was greatly thought of as a manager. For the Dominie's income was known to a shilling, and yet Adora could oftener change a pound than any other woman in the village.

"Have you heard how they divide the young men of Lowran, Dora?" said the Dominie, as with a certain quizzical expression in his eyes he watched the girl, with arms bared to the shoulder, scouring a "berry-pan" of shining brass in readiness for the yet distant preserving season. In the meanwhile it served as a point of light on the kitchen wall of the schoolhouse, a halo to which suitors lifted their eyes after gazing long at Adora.

"No, father," said the girl, without any great interest; "I thought the young men of Lowran were all alike."

"I heard it from Robin Gilchrist," he said. "The Deil's Buckies gang to Lucky Greentrees', the Daft Lads to Charlotte Webster's, but the Wise-like to see the Dominie!"

He chuckled audibly.

"The Wise-like to see the Dominie!" he repeated smilingly; "observe the prolepsis."

"I observe," said his daughter with spirit, "that we are in good company—Lucky Greentrees, Charlotte Webster, and the schoolhouse."

Donald Gracie shrugged his shoulders. He was the only man in Lowran who did this, till Sidney Latimer came home from the wars.

"My dear," he said, "the schoolhouse is a health resort. Why should we complain? Are we not the club, the parliament, the only alternative to the other two? You must not complain. They are all my old pupils."

"The Laird?" she queried, breathing hard on the obstinate brass and polishing vigorously.

"The Laird?" said Donald Gracie meditatively. "He comes, doubtless, for similar reasons. A great old empty house, a deaf mother with a temper, and the society of servants. Here—the pleasure of my society, books, some wit if scant wisdom——"

"And the pleasure of being set to polish jelly-pans!" said Adora. "Here, Laird, you are just in time to be of some use in the world."

She held out the brass boiling-pan to a tall, bearded, youngish man who came in at the moment. He took it from her hands and stood waiting directions. A slightly uncer-

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tain smile was on his lips. No salutation between any of them. Indeed, it was not their first meeting. Sidney Latimer had already "cried in" as he went down to the village to meet the mail-coach, which passed through Lowran every day on its journey from Newton Galloway to St. Cuthbertstown.

"And the cloth!" she said, pushing it towards him. "Nothing is wanting now but elbow-grease!"

She herself drew the great wheel out of the corner of the room, and laid a soft pile of "rowns" (or wool for spinning, rounded like macaroni) on a chair ready to her hand. In a moment more began the soft sough and *whoo* of the spinning-wheel, in those days the greatest incentive to conversation of the quieter sort, because it filled up the gaps, and gave everyone time to speak unhurriedly or to be silent without awkwardness.

Shy men got time to think. Exuberant men could be repressed. For the spinner, moving to and fro gracefully, easing and "raxing" her thread, could come in very effectively as accompaniment, sometimes *whoo*-ing so loud as to drown an awkward remark, or again stopping altogether to pick a knot off the thread, till the sudden silence brought out a sentence as if it had been printed in the largest capitals. Tricksome Penelopes often did this of *malice prepense*.

It was some considerable time since the Laird of Lowran had begun to drop in regularly at the schoolhouse. As principal heritor of the parish, it was manifestly his duty, and, after a while, it became his pleasure also. Yet he explained himself manfully enough to Adora when, as to-night, she took him frankly to task about the matter.

"Why do I come?" he repeated after her. "Well, perhaps the best answer is that I shall continue to come so long as you permit me. I am *not* leaving my own class and consorting with village folk. Your father, Mistress Dora, is a gentleman, if ever I met one. I have abundantly tried my 'equals,' as you call them, since my return. They are not my equals—nor yours. Is Chesney Barwhinnock my equal, who cannot make himself intelligible without a string of oaths? or my Lord up yonder at Cairnsmore, who tells me thirty times in an hour: 'The people must be kept down, sir! The country is going to the dogs, sir!' or old Bodden, who is never happy till he has made every man at his table as drunk as himself? No, madam, these are not my equals!"

"But," said Adora, "have you thought at all of me in the matter?"

The young man with the brown beard looked quickly up at her. Adora's eyes were on her twirling spindle.

"I never think of anything——!"

"*Who—oo—oo—oooooo!*" said the spinning-wheel opportunely.

The noise stopped as soon as his lips ceased moving. With a glance she assured herself that her father was deep in his book, which he had lifted from his knee as soon as the Laird began to polish the brass berry-pan.

It was his usual way of entertaining a solitary guest, to leave him wholly to his daughter.

"But," said Adora, "you forget. You do not hear what the people say. I do!"

"And what do they say?" said the young Laird hastily, the flush maintaining itself on his cheek.

"A little thought will tell you that," she said, "or you can ask Jonathan Grier. He will inform you."

"I do not care——" he began, and then stopped of his own accord.

"No," said the girl, "you do not—because there is no reason why you should. But I—I have to think of myself, to speak for myself. My father——"

She lifted her eyes and indicated the Dominie to the Laird. He was deep in his Virgil, his thin forefinger beating out the time as the familiar lines flowed rhythmically in his head.

"You see," she went on, "I am in a manner alone. You are not of our degree, whatever you may say. And"— she added this more softly under cover of the gentlest sighing of the spinning-wheel—"the Lowran people draw no fine distinctions."

"Gross boors!" said the young man, his brow darkening angrily, "evil-tongued liars! If aught comes to my ear, I will clean the ground of them and theirs, and leave not a reeking chimney from one end of it to the other!"

There was a curious smile on the girl's face as she answered him.

"Aye," she said, "that were indeed a fine way to stop folk talking. To make my name a byword from bound to bound of the parish—could the art of man devise any surer means than that? Oh, man—man!"

"Doubtless they are indeed a continual torment to you," said Sidney Latimer, with sudden aggressive bitterness, "yet I never

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"Roy passed him rapidly with a slight but courteous salutation."

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saw anyone colder or better able to look after herself!"

For the first time Adora Gracie's face flushed. There was a soft dangerous light in her dark eyes.

"I have learned the lesson," she said quietly; "all my life I have had to think of and care for another before myself. Good for you if it had been your case!"

"And do I not think of someone else?" he said almost too loudly. "Pray tell me of whom am I thinking now?"

"Of yourself!" retorted Adora with perfect composure—"of no one but yourself!"

The young man half rose from his seat as if to go, but, changing his mind, sat down again.

"What would you have me do?" he said with a sigh.

For the space of two "rowns," Adora span on without answering. The moaning of the wide slim wheel filled the house with a sighing sadness.

"I would have you come less to the schoolhouse. My father, if you wish for society, will step over to the Great House of an evening to talk with you. The walk will do him good. You can have your Greek readings there instead of here. Then that dog of yours there will not sit barking on my doorstep as an advertisement of where his master spends his forenights. Then perhaps your mother will not scowl when she meets me, or twitch her dress to the side, lest it should be defiled by my touch."

"My mother!" cried the young man, so vehemently that Donald Gracie, who had fallen asleep over his Virgil, dropped his book with a crash and sat up, suddenly awakened by the noise.

"Ah, Mr. Latimer," he said, "I hope you will pardon an old man—but I think I am a little fatigued this evening. The school was close to-day."

Sidney Latimer picked up the book and gave it courteously back to his host. His mouth was a little grim under his moustache. The Dominie resumed his reading, turning away his shoulder to catch a more favourable light through the trees.

The Laird waited till the musical throb of the great wheel again filled the air.

"My mother," he said, in a low angry tone. "If my mother has——"

"I am sorry I spoke of that. It slipped out. It was nothing," said the girl hastily. "Your mother has every right to behave as she likes to me. But as far as in me lies I will give her no cause; nor, if I can prevent it, will I permit you to do so either. If you say anything of this to your mother, remember I wish never to see you or to speak with you again!"

"Dora—Dora, you make it hard—hard," groaned the young Laird. "What have I done, to be shut out from that which is free to my farmers, to my servants, to the son of an outlaw poacher? Ah!" he continued, noting the glow rise on her neck at the word, "that is it! There is someone whom you welcome as you never welcome me—someone who has other than hard words from you!"

Adora Gracie broke off her "rown" with a sharp snap, removed the half-filled spindle, swept all the fat coils of wool into a bag, and passed very erect to the door which led to the staircase.

"I bid you good-night!" she said; and, going out, she left him sitting.

CHAPTER XV.

A CONFIDENTIAL CONVERSATION.

As Sidney Latimer took his gloomy angers off through the red boles of the little schoolhouse plantation, he met a young man just entering by the gate. He was a tall and broad-shouldered young man, with a strongly moulded, clean-shaven boyish face, remarkably clear forth-looking eyes, and the easy unhurried carriage of one who lives habitually in the open air.

He was dressed like any well-to-do young farmer, wearing a blue bonnet, a grey homespun cut-away coat in the prevailing fashion, a long-flapped waistcoat of a dark blue colour besprent with small yellow flowers, close-fitting knee-breeches, grey hose deeply lined down the leg in the fashion known as "rig-and-furrow," while upon his feet strong moorland shoes with buckles of shining steel. He had silver ones at home, but he thought that to wear them would look conceited, so he left them at home.

This, as Sidney Latimer was aware, was the son of the squireen of the Bennanbrack Moors—Roy McCulloch of the House of Muir. As a landlord the name was more than ever anathema to him. Had not Sharon repeatedly defied the powers that be? Had he not set up corn-stooks after harvest to tempt their birds to the slaughter? Who but he shot their roedeer and made light of their gamekeepers? Yet he held to his poor three hundred acres, in spite of most advantageous

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offers to buy him out, with a tenacity which (being a fair-minded man in the main) the Laird of Lowran could not help admiring.

But on this occasion the eyes of Sidney Latimer were sicklied over with jealousy. And he scowled at Roy McCulloch going up to the schoolhouse with a savage humour which sat ill upon his handsome and open face. Roy passed him rapidly with a slight but courteous salutation, his muscular legs carrying him out of sight among the trees before the angry expression had faded off Latimer's face.

"Hang him!" muttered the young Laird. "So that is her choice, is it? A poacher and the son of a poacher!"

He stood on the white road, switching his leg and meditating.

"I wonder," he muttered between his teeth, "whether things cannot be so managed as to relieve the parish of both you and your father?"

Then a flush of shame rose to the Laird's brow, for he had been thinking of the press-gang.

"No, hang it!" he said, in the tone usual to him. "If I cannot win fairly, I am not going to play with loaded dice."

But then, when a man stays in company he cannot always prevent the loading of the dice, even with the best intentions in the world. So that night Jonathan Grier, who had been waiting in the lodge for the return of his master from the schoolhouse, observed with interest the unusual gloom of his countenance, and the air of angry preoccupation with which he dwelt on the misdeeds of the McCullochs. The poacher Sharon and his son were becoming a pest to the neighbourhood. They were carrying their lawlessness with a high hand. Something must be done. Thus fulminated the Laird of Lowran, stamping his way along his own avenue to his ancient mansion-house.

Whereupon Jonathan Grier, a wily man, put two and two together, bethinking him if there was nothing to his advantage in all this.

He had seen Roy McCulloch pass by on his way to the Dominie's. He had even cried him a neighbourly greeting. For, save in the way of business, there was in Lowran usually no animosity between law-breaker and law-preserver. Now, it is well to repeat the fact that Jonathan Grier was a wily man. He had come from the North of Ireland in the time of the late Laird, and had been continued in his position by Sidney Latimer, less from personal liking than because he had made himself necessary to the young Laird's peace of mind by a certain influence which the chief gamekeeper possessed over his mother.

Mrs. Latimer had never yet been able to understand that her son was grown up, or that he had attained an age to think on any subject for himself. To her he was still the boy who had been sent to school to learn the Latin grammar, to be birched into unwilling rectitude, and who, at set intervals, returned home to be cosseted and posseted for ailments more or less imaginary. Still, upon going out, he must be laid wait for in the hall to see that he encased himself in his proper muffler and overshoes. Still he must be ambushed upon his return, that he might give an account of himself and his pursuits during every hour of absence.

"My Sidney," the Lady of Lowran used to say to Mrs. Rebecca Purslane, her confidential maid, "must never get out of the habit of confiding entirely in his mother. He must continue to tell me everything, and the habit shall be at once his safeguard and mine. No evil companionships! No designing young women! I would see through them at once. I would warn him. Nay, I would go direct to the hussies and tell them what I thought of them!"

"But," said Mrs. Rebecca, shaking the black bugles on her many-bastioned headdress, "there's that schoolmaster's daughter on the hill. What was the awsome thing I heard the last time I took a quarter of a pound o' the spoilt green tea ye couldna drink to Betty Howdie in the village? Betty—a godly woman, and well informed—telled me that the young Laird was up at the schoolhouse five nights out of the lawfu' six every week in the year!"

At this the Lady of Lowran shook her head all the more vehemently.

"Betty Howdie is one fool and you another, Purslane!" she cried. "As soon as he came in I asked Sidney to tell me the truth, and he assured me that there was nothing in the report. He goes there to read Greek with the schoolmaster, a very learned man. Besides, Jonathan Grier has seen him through the window, with a book in his hand, listening enraptured to the schoolmaster expounding the quirky passages. And I myself, from the road, have heard the girl's spinning-wheel humming like a bees' byke a' the time Sidney was in at his lesson."

As she listened, Mrs. Rebecca laid the points of her long bony fingers together and

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"'Speak out, woman, if ony word you have to say is worth a sensible woman's listening to!'"

cast her eyes upwards, a graven image of a virgin martyr. She had her sufferings with her mistress, and for the last fifteen years had resolved to change her place at least three times a week; but the carelessness of her superior and the perquisites of her office more than made up for the many names which the Lady of Lowran called her, when, as Purslane put it, she was "sore left to herself and forsaken by grace."

On the present occasion the waiting-maid knew that Mrs. Latimer was not nearly so comfortable in her mind as she would have herself believe. But Purslane was far too experienced a maid to say so. She had not striven with her own "poor defunct" so

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long without knowing that, in love as in war, a flank attack succeeds much oftener than a frontal one. So she let the lady satisfy herself as to the harmlessness of Adora Gracie, before suggesting that the next time they went to the village together they should both of them call upon such a desirable neighbour.

"If she's a' that ye say, she deserves to be encouraged," pursued Purslane diplomatically; "and I am sure the young woman wad be mightily complimented by a visit from your Leddyship."

But "her Leddyship" declined to be mollified so simply.

"Ye are a silly auld body, Purslane!" she cried imperiously. "What would I be doing encouraging any young person to think herself above her position?"

At which Purslane sighed and maintained that peculiarly elevated silence which always aggravated her mistress.

"Why can you not speak when you have anything to say, Rebecca Purslane?" she said. "There, dinna pretend to greet! Woman, ye ought to be ashamed at your time of life to be a perfect waterworks. Yes, of course, you are a lonely widow, and a deil's sicht better off than when Purslane was alive, if the tenth part o' what ye hae telled me be true. Speak out, woman, if ony word you have to say is worth a sensible woman's listening to!"

"Ah!" said Purslane mournfully, "I will speak that which is sore upon my heart. It is that, though, by the blessing of a kind Providence, still able for my work, the day will come when I shall desire to take a little rest from my labours ——"

"Your labours!" cried her mistress, growing more hotly indignant, and also in speech more colloquial; "do ye think that bringing me my cap twice a day, and girning like a sheep's head in the tongs the rest of your time, is 'labour'? If that is your idea of labour, ye have passed brave and easy through the world—that's a' I hae to say to you! But what are ye driving at, Purslane? Let us hae it!"

"Weel," said Purslane primly, as though suffering in silence those "scorns" which patient merit from the unworthy takes, "what thinks your leddyship of asking the young woman at the schoolhouse to come and bide here—to learn under me, as it were—that in time, when I am laid aside, she might be able in some measure to fill my place?"

As if propelled by a spring, the Lady of Lowran rose from her chair and, taking Purslane by the shoulders, gave her a shake that made the bugles clash on her cap.

"O' all the unconscionable idiots," she cried, "Becky Purslane, ye are the crown! To think that ye hae spent as muckle time on the Footstool, and yet hae acquired nae mair gumption than an unspeaned calf! Providence has indeed weared a deal mair hard wark on you than it will never get back its ain siller for! To speak o' bringin' a young woman into the quiet house of Lowran—and an innocent laddie like Sidney in it! What do ye think I keep the like of you—an auld done body that there is neither sense nor work in—no to speak o' Isabel Byres there, wha is but a gizzened tub, and canna even see when she washes a neckerchief clean, and bleared cook Ailie in the kitchen, wha's face wad fricht auld Nickieben himself frae laying a hand on her in ony wrangous way—what for are the like o' you aboot the Lowran, but that the bairn that has been gi'en to me may be delivered frae the temptations o' the flesh—at least, in his ain mither's house?"

"Aye," said Purslane, moving her head this way and that gingerly to make sure that it had not been shaken off her shoulders, "that's as may be. I am a poor widow woman, and think naething o' the gauds of the flesh or o' the beauty of adornment, being content in my humble sphere with the ornamentation of a meek and contented spirit. But yet maybe, if there was somewhat mair attraction in the House of Lowran, the young maister might be inclined to bide a kennin' nearer hame. I mind aye what said godly Mr. Whittaker, of Cauldslaps Meeting House, in his fast-day Exercise and Additions, that between the young and the auld there was a great gulf fixed."

"Daft havers!" cried the old lady. "I ken ye, Purslane, ye will hae some lang-leggit limmer o' a niece o' your ain to propose! But I'll never let a young hempie within my doors in the way of service! And as for visitors—faith, they will wait lang for an invite frae me!"

"But the Laird will doubtless marry some day," suggested Purslane, with artful meekness; "and life is an uncertain thing at the best. Like mysel', your leddyship is getting well stricken in years. Were it not wiser to look for a wife to him yoursel', rather than leave him to be trappit by the first that whistles 'Come hither!' to him ower the wa'?"

"Ye forget yoursel', Purslane!" cried the

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"'Oh, Sidney! dinna look at me like—like your faither!'"

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mistress of Lowran. "In the first place, I am mony and mony a year younger than you"—here Purslane smiled discreetly behind her seam—"and secondly, Sidney is but a laddie. There will be time enough to think o' his marrying ony time these ten years to come. I could never be doing with a fine lady to sit in the parlour and turn her thumbs aboot ilk ither. But I'll no deny that, if I could find a biddable lass o' decent family, wi' a reasonable pickle siller, she micht be handy for dusting the cheena ornaments on the upstairs mantelpiece. What wi' age and laziness, ye are gettin' that handless and useless whiles that I declare there will soon be never a thing left breakable in Lowran House except the chimney cans! And, faith, ye wad break them too if ye could win at them!"

"There's Catherine Bodden of Buttonbotham—she's a fine lass, they tell me," pursued Purslane, who by long practice kept to the matter in hand with steadfast persistence through all the storms of insult with which her mistress assailed every expression of opinion.

"A heedless haverel!" cried Mrs. Latimer, jerking her work in the air so vigorously that she lost her needle and wasted much time seeking for it. This being found, Purslane had to be assisted up from her knees, which always stiffened in the act of stooping, and refused to do their duty in raising her from the ground.

"Weel, mem, what's your thocht o' the Lady Elspeth or the Lady Biddy Lennox?" was the next suggestion of the maid, when they were again seated at their tasks.

"Proud madams, baith the twa o' them! They shall never come within this house with my will!"

"It wad be a great phrase in the country if the Laird mairriet the dochter o' a viscount!"

"A Latimer o' Lowran is as guid as ony Lennox that ever wore silk mittens!" cried the emphatic Lady of that ilk.

"Maybe—maybe," said Purslane soothingly; "far be it frae me to say aught other—or to think it. But they tell me this Lady Biddy is a bonny biddable lass!"

"I would never agree with their mither!" cried Mrs. Latimer. "They shall not come here into my house—no, though I had to bar the door in the faces of the hale Hoose o' Peers, an' a' the bink o' bishops at their tail!"

"Then there's Doctor Meiklewham's daughter Hope," pursued the mentor. "They tell me there's no the like of her for a sober, solid, wise-like lass—the pick o' the pairish and the apple o' her faither's eye!"

"Let her bide wi' her faither, then, gin he's sae fond o' her. Nae lass wi' sic a Covenanting fore-end name shall ever get my son. 'Hope,' indeed! It might as weel hae been 'Faith' or 'Charity'!"

"Deed then, mistress, but ye are ill to please wi' a wife for your son," said Purslane, who had much liberty of speech with her mistress. "It's my puir opinion that ye dinna want him to be wed ava'——"

"Let be," said the Lady of Lowran. "It's little ye ken aboot the needs o' ancient families, Rebecca Purslane! Think ye that it would not be a sore day for me to think that my son was to be the last Latimer of Lowran?"

"Whilk he is mair nor likely to be, mistress," said Purslane, some little nettled, "gin ye forbid every honest lass the door o' your hoose, as if she carried the plague aboot wi' her in the faulds o' her kerchief!"

"Forbid here, forbid there!" cried the irascible old lady. "I forbid nane. The Hoose o' Lowran is my son's—no' mine. And if it is his guidwill to bring the wife he fancies hame to this dwelling, I hope that I'll be strengthened to do my duty by his choice!"

"Guid pity her, then!" ejaculated Purslane under her breath, but not low enough to escape the sharp ears of her mistress.

"Ye are an insolent ungrateful woman, Rebecca Purslane," she broke out, "and I wad hae ye ken that what I have to put up with frae you and the ither twa wizened fairlies aboot the Hoose o' Lowran maks a' other troubles o' little account. I ken well I hae the repute o' being snell-tongued, but that is because my heart is chastened by you and the like o' you. And whiles ye try me that sair, that (Heaven is my witness!) either death or my son's marriage wad be a welcome relief!"

CHAPTER XVI.

INFLUENCE BY RICOCHET.

Now, Rebecca Purslane was a wise woman and knew her mistress's temper. She influenced by ricochet.

No words could, to all appearance, have been more utterly thrown away, no seed sown on poorer soil with less prospect of harvest, than the suggestions concerning the entrance of some young person of her own sex into the dragon-guarded House of Lowran. But the

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aged Purslane was wily. She had lived long with Mrs. Latimer, and knew that the surest way to have your opinions adopted was to keep ding-donging at them, allowing the Lady of Lowran no rest day nor night. For Purslane slept in the same room as her employer.

"Hush," said Mrs. Latimer, at the close of this first round of the engagement, "there is the hall door. Sidney has come home!"

"I hae little need to hush," said the attendant tartly; "it wasna me that was speakin'."

The Lady of Lowran lifted her finger so threateningly that Rebecca contented herself with shaking her head till the black bugles rang a perfect fire-alarm on her head. Then her mistress silently laid down her seam and went out. So soon as she was gone, Purslane threw herself back on the cushions of her chair and laughed silently—laughed till the tears traced out furrows on her wrinkled cheeks.

"The fule!" she murmured—"oh, the auld fule!"

* * * * *

Mrs. Latimer went into the hall expecting to see her son. It was his custom to take off his boots in a little side-room devoted to guns, dog-whips, and the smell of varnish. But on this occasion Sidney Latimer went directly to the library. His mother followed him thither, her face, as was its custom, growing mellower and more kindly at every step. By the time she stood on the mat outside the door, which he had hastily closed, no trace remained of the sharp-tongued, acerb old lady who had so recently been sparring with her long-suffering companion. She opened the door gently. Her son was seated at his desk, scribbling furiously. Presently he thrust the sheet of paper from him, and sat biting the feather of a pen, as if meditating upon what more he was to write on the white surface. Very boyish and ardent he seemed, in spite of his beard and the self-contained look he owed to his English education. He started up in some confusion upon Mrs. Latimer's entrance.

"Ah, mother!" he said, rising to salute her, "I did not hear you come downstairs."

"I came to see if you were at all fatigued," she said. "Perhaps you ought to take something before dinner?"

"I thank you, mother," said the young man, restive under the attention, "but I am not tired."

"You have been on the hills again? You have been at the fishing?"

It was the lady who was fishing.

"No, mother," said Sidney Latimer, elaborately careless. "I only walked over to meet the coach in the village. I had some letters to post."

His mother looked at him softly for a moment. He stood by the mantelpiece, still chafing at the interruption to his writing. She divined the feeling instantly. The discussion she had had with Purslane began to make itself felt. She walked over to him and laid a hand gently on his coat sleeve. (Though she did not know it, the views she now held were Purslane's, not her own.)

"Sidney," she said, "you are lonely here, with no other companions than a couple of old women—one of them a fool."

"No, mother"—he smiled down at her with the wistful attachment of only sons—"I am not lonely at Lowran. I have you!"

In fact, he might have added that at that moment he desired to be somewhat more lonely than he was. He almost prayed for his mother's departure. Yet, as sons go, he was a good son; and as for Mrs. Latimer, she never looked at him without seeing a little boy in his first knee-breeches. She saw even the silver buckles on his shoes. It would save much trouble if sons could always remain as their mothers keep them pictured in their hearts.

"You need some bright young person in the house," pursued Mrs. Latimer, to Sidney's astonishment. "What say you to your cousin Matilda from Parton? Think, dear Sidney, she would also be a companion for me—your mother. Purslane is old and a fool. A young girl in the house would brighten us all."

"Well, mother," said Sidney, smiling, "do as you like. Ask Matilda Gregory from Parton, or all the six Gregorys, if it please you. Only pray don't expect me to dance attendance on them."

His mother hastened on, in order to keep him from further speech.

"Then, if we had a young girl in the house to be companion for them, I dare say some o' the Boddens of Buttonbotham or the Lennox sisters would come on a visit? Or what say you to that nice lass o' the minister's? She is well reported of."

"Mother," said Sidney Latimer seriously, "what has come to you? You are troubled and not like yourself. Tell me!"

And, most strangely, at these words the erstwhile fierce old lady burst into tears.

"It is about you I am troubled, Sidney," she said. Her hands were shaking, and her

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lips quivered with that tremulousness of age which the will cannot stop.

"Anxious about me?" repeated Sidney Latimer vaguely. "In what way am I giving you anxiety, mother?"

"Oh, I dare not tell you!" she sighed. "I dare not—you would be sore angered. And that I could not bear."

Sidney Latimer blushed with a secret forecasting that if she meant to speak to him of Adora Gracie, he would be very angry indeed. He called this conscious innocence.

So there was constrained silence between them for something like a brace of minutes. Then the old lady let her hand drop from his arm.

"Ah, yes!" she murmured, "I see you would be angry. You love her!"

Sidney Latimer flushed dark, and his eyes looked as a son's eye ought never to look at his mother.

"Oh, do not be angry, Sidney!" she cried, catching him. "How can I help it? You are all I have—all I ever had."

But a chill whiteness was creeping over her son's face, a kind of icy chill which was unspeakably terrible to her. Her boy seemed to vanish before her eyes, and only a stranger remained.

"Oh, Sidney!" was all she could say, breaking into the folk-speech that lay near the heart; "dinna look at me like—like your faither!"

* * * * *

"Someone has been telling lies to you, mother," said the young man, commanding his voice (he could not command his face). "I request to be told who."

"Oh!" quavered the old lady, "do not 'request' of your own mother, Sidney. That also is like your faither, and I want to forget it. Be my boy, and I will tell you—word for word!"

"Tell me," he said, inflexibly stern.

"Sit down, Sidney—oh, sit down! I think I could speak to you better that gate. I think—ye wadna be—sae far—frae your auld mither."

Oh, the pitiful ones who, having set up idols and worshipped them, go all their lives in fear of their gods' anger!

"No, I will not sit down, mother," reiterated Sidney Latimer. "Tell me what you have heard; then, after I have answered, I will sit down."

He did not mean to be hard, but there comes a time in the life of a young man when the voice of every woman but one falls dull upon the ear. At such times let mothers see to it that their words are few and well ordered—and the fewer the better. If otherwise, they may come to cry bitterly: "Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the breasts that never gave suck!"

Yet, in a little age, and pitifulness did their work on Sidney Latimer's heart. True, he would not soften till he had heard the worst; but he was no son to bring grey hairs down to any sorrow if he could help it.

"They told me——" she began falteringly.

"Who?" interjected Sidney Latimer determinedly.

"Oh! this one and that about the village," said his mother, hastening over the point. "They say that you pass every house in the street to spend your time at one—with the schoolmaster's daughter."

"And if so," said he stilly, "what harm?"

"What harm?" repeated his mother. "Are you not Sidney Latimer of Lowran, your father's son? Are you not laird of the best estate in the parish, and you ask what harm?"

"Let that alone for the moment," he said. "Has anyone aught to say against Adora Gracie?"

"Not a word," said Mrs. Latimer truthfully, "except that, being what she is, the daughter of a drunken father, herself a village schoolmistress, she does very wrong to encourage a man in my son's position."

Sidney Latimer laughed suddenly and harshly, and at the sound of his voice the mother's face blanched. She knew that strange clanging discord which rings in a man's laughter when he mocks bitterly at himself.

"Help me, my God!" was the prayer of her heart; "*is it even now too late?*"

But, as if in answer to her thought, Sidney Latimer stepped slowly from the mantelpiece, against which he had been leaning, to the open desk. He lifted the sheet of paper he had instinctively pushed aside on his mother's entering.

"Read that!" he said.

Flustered by his precipitancy, the old lady felt in her hanging pocket of black satin for her silver spectacles. Her hands were trembling, so that she could hardly find the case.

"Read it to me," she said gently.

"No," said Sidney Latimer; "read with your own eyes, and tell me if, after that, you think that the drunken man's daughter has encouraged your son!"

His mother went slowly to the window to get the warm light from the west upon the

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sheet. Only a few lines had been written, and those with the extremity of haste.

To Miss Adora Gracie, at the Schoolhouse of Lowran.

Madam,—

Since your rejection of my proffered friendship this evening, and your command not to return to your house, I have resolved to place my feelings for you, and my admiration of your character, beyond the reach of misconstruction, by immediately quitting the country.

My friend General Barnard, presently with my Lord Wellington's forces in Spain, has offered me——

The paper fluttered to the floor. The old lady took two or three uncertain steps towards where her son stood.

"Sidney," she cried, "you will not—oh, you will not! Would you kill your mother?"

She stretched out her arms towards him wildly.

He caught her and set her on a couch. Then he sat down beside her and took her hand with more than his usual tenderness.

"Listen, mother," he said. "You say—and she says—that I compromise her by remaining. She would not listen to me to-night when I would have told her that I loved her."

"Then you have not yet told her?" cried his mother, a sharp joy in her heart which she tried in vain to keep out of her voice.

"No matter—she knows!" said her son; "and she will not listen to me. Her reasons are yours: her father—my position. But the expression of them does her more honour than they do my mother when she insults me by repeating the tattle of the village."

"It was not I——," said Mrs. Latimer feebly. "Jonathan Grier——"

"Ah!" cried the young man, "Jonathan Grier! Are we coming to it now? And what had he to do with the matter?"

"Nothing—nothing," said his mother with eagerness. "I mistook—I promised!"

Sidney Latimer did not persist. He only made a mental note with regard to his chief gamekeeper. His mother took him by both hands.

"You will not leave me?" she said, adding slowly, the words forcing themselves out: "I will forgive even that—I will do all that you wish, if you really love this girl!"

It was a terrible strain, but the desire to keep her son by her side and in safety conquered all else.

Sidney Latimer shook his head sadly.

"It cannot be, mother," he said. "As you used to sing: 'I have gotten my fee and my leave.' Less than any common village wooer can I trespass again upon an absolute prohibition, or cross the threshold which has been forbidden to me."

"You, the Laird, who could send Dominie and Dominie's lass about their business with a word to the Kirk Session!"

"All the more because of that," he said, with a steadfast determination. "What would you think of me if I were to use my position to revenge myself upon an innocent girl who has every right to her own opinion of me?"

The Lady of Lowran suddenly and unexpectedly flamed into anger.

"That she should make light of my son! That the hussy should dare to scorn——"

"Stop, mother!" He smiled upon her. "Do not be angry. Think how much more angry you would have been if Adora Gracie had seen fit to take me at my word."

(*To be continued.*)

THE POINT OF VIEW.

MY next-door neighbour's life to me
A dull grey cloud appears to be,
A dreary round of little use,
No golden joys, no great abuse,
But just the endless, silly chain
Of pigmy tasks of paltry gain;
And, doubtless, mine to her appears
As much devoid of hopes and fears;
Yet neither knows the rainbow arch
That spans for each her daily march;
For only living, doing, brings
The hopes and joys of little things.

MARGARET PRESCOTT MONTAGUE.

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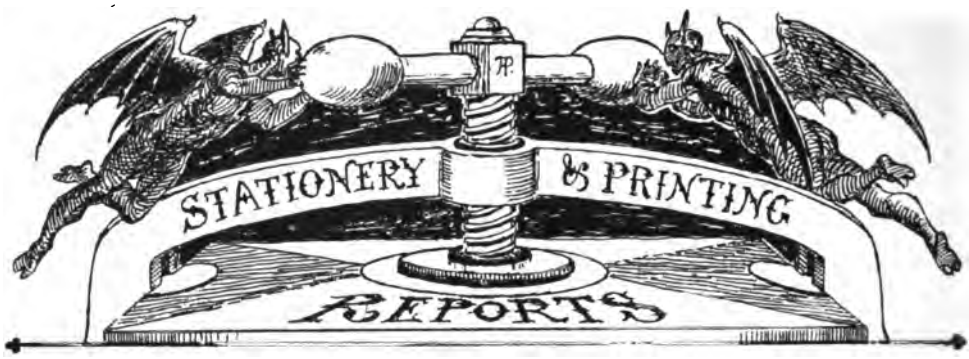

THE WASTE OF PUBLIC MONEY.

By Ernest E. Williams,

Author of "The Imperial Heritage," "Made in Germany," "Marching Backward," and "The Foreigner in the Farmyard."

No. IV.—STATIONERY AND PRINTING.

Note.—I wish at the commencement of each of these articles to remove a possible cause of misapprehension. It is necessary, in the course of them, to say hard things of members of the present Government; but that is because the present Government has been in office for a number of years beyond which, in order to keep the illustrations of bureaucratic methods up to date, it has not been thought desirable to travel. Criticisms involving the acts of Ministers are not to be interpreted as in any sense a party attack, and it is not suggested that had the Opposition been in office, its members would have done better.—E. E. W.

LET me press home my point one stage farther, if my readers will forgive me proceeding upon the method of "the house that Jack built." First, we considered the evidence of bureaucratic incapacity and wastefulness in the case of the Meat Contracts in the South African war. That showed our Government at work under high pressure and emergency. Then came the Remount scandals, showing the same thing in another Department, but showing also inefficient organisation in ordinary times as well as in the time of emergency. Following them we looked at the Cordite scandals, which displayed the bureaucracy at work in normal times, and blundering without any excuse of pressure. These various exhibitions leave little scope for the Governmental apologist, and drive him back upon the suggestion that the Government only goes wrong when it has in hand the allocation of special contracts; they do not prove, he may say, anything amiss with the great routine organisation of the Government. But how if in this matter also the Government can be accused of wastefulness? An examination of Governmental expenditure under the head of Stationery and Printing will prove this last accusation also.

In the nature of the case the printing and stationery bills for the public service must needs run into money. Paper is cheap and printing is not dear; but when the work is done on a very large scale, one must be prepared for a considerable aggregate bill. But I doubt if the ordinary man of business is quite prepared to hear that the Government's bill, after deducting £90,000 on account of appropriations in aid (obtained from the sale of Government publications, etc.), amounts to no less than £784,000 a year. That is an enormous figure, and notwithstanding the obvious great extent of Governmental printing and stationery wants, it requires a lot of justifying. Let my readers try to imagine the quantities of printing and stationery work which they could get for £784,000, and I shall be surprised if their imagination does not soon begin to gasp.

Moreover, the amount is growing all the time. Take only the three latest years for

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comparison. For the year ended March, 1901, the original vote asked for the Stationery Department was £600,060 (more than £20,000 in advance of the original vote for the previous year). Later in the Session the Government asked for a supplementary vote of £110,000. In the Estimates of other Departments provision for stationery and printing charges was also taken to the amount of £12,932. This gives us a total vote of £800,165, practically the whole of which, as the final expenditure returns show, was spent. Deduct appro-

priations in aid—£90,105—and you get a total cost to the country in that year of £722,992.

In the following year, that ended March, 1902, the original vote was £648,037 (a big advance, you will see, upon the previous year); yet the Government had to come for a supplementary vote of £98,000, and the stationery and printing provision taken in other Estimates was £13,603. Thus, allowing for the appropriations in aid—£90,255—you have a net total for the year of £759,640.

For the year ending March, 1903, the Government has estimated an expenditure of £860,400 for the Stationery and Printing Department, and £14,181 provision in other Estimates. Deducting £90,255 appropriations in aid, there remains a net sum for the current year of £784,326. For this year there is no supplementary vote. When defending the original vote in the House of Commons, Mr. Austen Chamberlain described it as "a serious effort to obtain a more correct estimate." It may have been more correct, but it represents, notwithstanding, not only an enormous sum in itself, but an increase of £61,334 over the amount expended upon stationery and printing two years previously. If this ratio of increase proceeds, we shall soon be wanting an amount equal to the entire ordinary revenue of a moderate-sized State to defray the cost of our stationery and printing.

Now, can such tremendous figures for such a comparatively minor item of national expenditure be justified? Waste and extravagance have been admitted by Ministers and officials themselves. It was admitted by the Minister in charge when, upon the discussion of the 1902–3 vote in the House of Commons, Mr. Austen Chamberlain said: "There was no doubt a certain amount of waste, but he and the Controller of the Stationery Department did their best to check the expenditure." And if one examines the accounts for the past two years, it is easy to trace further admissions of extravagance and unnecessary expenditure. In the detailed Estimates one comes across asterisks prefixed to particular salaries, referring the reader to a note to the effect that "this post and its duties will be reconsidered on a vacancy." Remarks of this kind may be taken as evidence of a desire to practise economy; but all the same, and particularly when one bears in mind what a very small amount of work is considered in bureaucratic circles to justify a salaried appointment, one cannot but see in these statements an uneasy conscience as to existing expenditure, and one is prompted to inquire whether these tentative efforts after economy really represent the sum of what might and should be done in that direction.

Take first the matter of salaries. In the year 1899–1900 the salary list for the Stationery Office establishment amounted to £30,164; in 1900–1 to £30,755; in 1901–2 to £31,632; and in 1902–3 to £32,900. This does not look as if the efforts after economy in salaries had achieved very tan-

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gible results. It is impossible, unless one is actually in the Office, or has very intimate relations with it, to know whether every man on the staff does regularly the day's work which alone justifies his appointment, but the easy ways of Government offices are notorious; and the salary list itself, particularly when viewed in the light of the frequent notes about reconsidering posts on a vacancy, to which I have already referred, suggests the practicability of further economy, if not in the number of the men employed, at all events in the salaries which they receive. Remember the conditions of Government service — its permanency, its generous pensions, the easy regularity of the work, the usually modest demand which it makes upon the mental powers of those engaged in it, the generally agreeable character of the position — and it must be admitted that Government service ought certainly not to be paid at higher rates than the same class of work would be paid for outside the service. I should be sorry to be thought to advocate starvation rates of pay, and it is often the wisest economy to pay generously in order to get the right man; but this principle can have only an occasional application to the routine work of a Government office.

Let us look at some of the posts in the Stationery Office and the salaries attached to them. The Controller has £1,200 a year and a house allowance of £300 a year, and he is at present aided by an assistant controller at £750 a year, whose post, we learn from the Estimates, is to be reconsidered upon a vacancy. Going a little way down the list we come to a storekeeper, who is paid £550 a year, which seems at least ample. Among the numerous clerks is one batch of five whose united salaries amount to £2,100 a year. There are three examiners of printers' accounts, whose united salaries come to £1,102; one examiner of binders' accounts, who is paid £238 a year. There are twenty-four second-division clerks, whose united salaries amount to nearly £4,000. The year before there were only twenty-two of these clerks; two years previously only nineteen. Then there is an examiner of paper at £500 a year; two assistant examiners of paper, whose combined salaries amount to £582; an examiner of binding, with a maximum salary of £450; an assistant examiner of binding, whose maximum is £300; two extra assistant examiners of binding, whose maximum salaries are £200 each. There are twenty porters paid from 30*s.* to 36*s.* a week—the rate which is paid outside for skilled artisans. Then there are numerous extra allowances given to clerks for doing work. The gentleman, for example, who acts as private secretary to the Controller has £50 extra beyond his office salary, and so on. One cannot place one's finger upon any one of these or similar posts in the Office and say positively that it is unnecessary or over-paid, but the general impression which is undoubtedly made is that more might be done in the direction of economy, and that several hundreds, if not thousands, might be saved in this Office alone. And it is fair to assume that the Stationery Office is not organised upon a different plan from the many other and larger departments of the Civil Service, and in that case the total amount which might be saved in salaries would amount to a very large sum.

With regard to the Stationery bill, it may be that it is now of reasonable proportions; but the following circumstance is worth bearing in mind. A few years ago Sir Howard Vincent stirred up the Government in connection with the Stationery Department's practice of buying a large proportion of its goods abroad. This action was taken not on behalf of economy, but for the sake of home industry. The result of the agitation was that Mr. Hanbury, then Secretary to the Treasury, ordered the Stationery Office to place its orders at home instead of abroad. This change not only had the result (which should always be attempted by Government Departments) of encouraging native industry, but it also resulted in reducing the Stationery bill by a sum estimated at £50,000 a year. Here, then, we have the Stationery Department convicted of having wasted the country's money for the purpose of discouraging the country's trade; and it is fair to assume that it would have gone on doing so but for an outside agitation. Again, as in the exposition of all these Governmental scandals, one wonders how many similar things there are behind which circumstances have not yet dragged into light. It is difficult to follow the Ministerial apologists in their contention that the scandals which have been made public are the only scandals which exist.

Let us now consider the Printing bill. The readiness with which Ministers are at all times prepared to grant printed returns upon any subject which may interest a member of Parliament is by some accounted for upon

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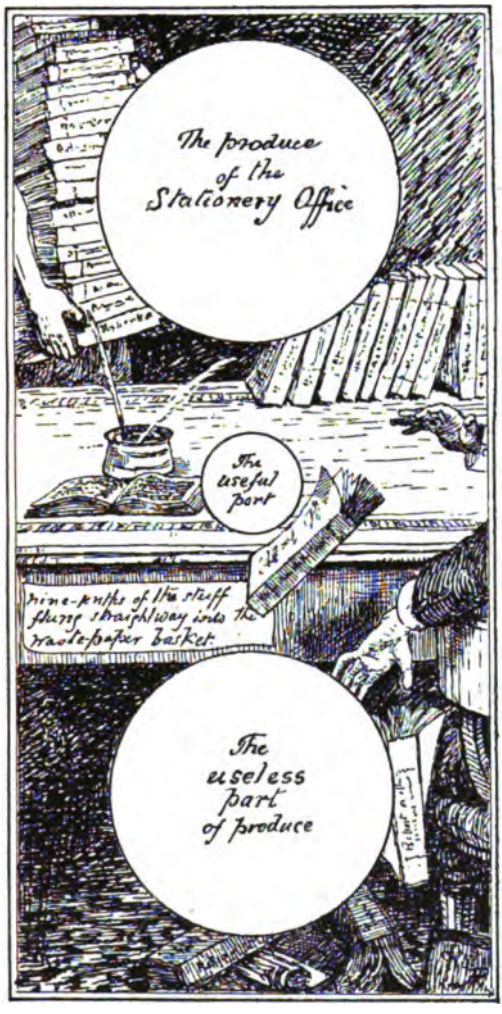
the theory that an order for a return is a god-send to the clerks and officials in the Service, as providing them with a little work to do, to vary the monotony of their office existence. And there is something more than jocularity in the theory. Obviously, if so many returns were not prepared and printed, there would be no excuse for keeping the



staffs of the offices at their present proportions.

Now, are all these returns wanted or justified? It is convenient, in considering this matter, to take it under the head of the Stationery and Printing Office, but of course it will be seen that it is not alone this Office which is involved, but the other Offices all over the Service where the returns are prepared for the Stationery Office to print. Everyone who is on the list for receiving Government publications must, until the impression is dulled by constant repetition, be startled at the flood of printed matter which daily pours forth from the Government printers, and it is usual to fling at least nine-tenths of the stuff straightway into the waste-paper basket. Such treatment, however, of any particular publication does not of course prove the publication to be useless; a document which may be absolutely without interest to one man may be of interest and importance to others, and to a sufficient number to justify publication; one therefore needs to examine the documents themselves. But a complete overhauling, even of one year's Government publications, would be really too stupendous a task, and we must content ourselves with one or two random selections.

Let us begin with Ministerial testimony. In the discussion in the House of Commons of the Stationery and Printing vote for 1903, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, who was in charge of the vote, "complained of the constant pressure exercised by the House on Ministers to supply returns, and said that much of the expenditure was money thrown away. One return which had been asked for, in respect of Voluntary Schools, cost £1,500, and that return was necessarily inaccurate owing to the absence of information at the disposal of the Departments out of which to compile it correctly." I think the taxpayer will say it is all very well to make the complaint; but why was the Government so weak or so careless of the public purse entrusted to its charge as to give the return? And the country would be justified in demanding of the person responsible for giving the order that he should refund the money out of his private pocket. If a system of surcharge upon Ministers and officials were adopted, after the manner of the Local Government Board's system of surcharge in the case of unjustified expenditure by local bodies, this waste of taxpayers' money might soon be brought within modest proportions.

Now for one or two more examples. Before me are two volumes (8 and 9 of a series) published under the auspices of the Board of Education. An idea of the bulk of these volumes may be gathered from the fact that these two out of the series are together nearly three inches thick. One contains 621 pages and the other 703 pages. I assume the other volumes are of like proportions. They are entitled "Special

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Reports on Educational Subjects," and are compiled by various writers, who, we learn, "are alone responsible for the opinions they express." Their opinions are many, and occupy much space in the setting forth. The point is, Does the public desire these opinions, and especially at the cost which their collation and publication involve? The volumes are marked with prices—2*s.* 7*d.* and 3*s.* 2*d.* respectively—but the customers who pay these sums must be microscopically few and nowhere nearly sufficient to defray the cost, much the greater part of which falls directly upon the taxpayer. I open volume 8 at random, and find, at page 323, a long quotation from one of Matthew Arnold's works regarding some debate in the Netherlands in 1857 on the subject of religious education. I open again at page 337, and find the beginning of a chronological table of political events in the Netherlands from 1780 onwards. At page 113 I find a series of literary criticisms, the product of Mr. J. G. Legg and Mr. M. E. Sadler. Here the reader learns that Tegner "revived for his compatriots the old Scandinavian poetry"; that another poet, Geijer, is also "the greatest of Swedish historians," and that he and Tegner are "peculiarly representative of the culture and liberal opinions of their day and country." One also learns with relief that Bishop J. O. Wallin, "the compiler of the Swedish official Psalter," is "a powerful religious poet." Yet somehow one would rather see these valuable appreciations in the more widely read columns of, say, the *Athenæum*; and one cannot avoid the reflection that, though Civil Service young men are noted for their industry in turning their leisure office hours to good account by writing for the papers and magazines, yet it is the proprietors of the papers and magazines who pay them for their valuable criticisms; it is novel to learn that the Government also pays for literary pronouncements. I would suggest that periodicals are the proper place for discussions of this character, and that if editors do not want them, it is not quite right to make the country pay for their publication.

In the same volume I find an article by Mr. S. R. Hart upon the teaching of languages in secondary day schools, which surely would be more appropriately left to the editor of a magazine, who would have judged whether there was a market for this particular contribution.

Towards the end of the volume I come across accounts of three school journeys in Yorkshire. One of these interesting jaunts was made to Roche Abbey, Sandbeck, and Furbeck, by boys from the Thornhill Board School, Rotherham School Board (N.D.). The account begins: "The long-wished-for day arrived with a clear sky and a light breeze, an ideal day for a country ramble." The boys seemed to have enjoyed themselves. They happened against a market cross in the course of their rambles, and apparently quite an animated discussion arose over the meaning of the cross, for it appears that a contested explanation "brought forth mention of other crosses, as for instance, Charing Cross, Holy Cross, and Weeping Cross." All this, of course, was edifying to young boys, but we begin to blush for their edification when we read: "On one of the old houses near the Cross there is a sign to be seen, in the form of a shield let into the wall, and on which" (oh! for the Board School grammar) "is the following inscription: 'Come early to-morrow for good ale, and you shall have it for nothing.'" Now, why on earth is this sort of school magazine matter reproduced at considerable length and great cost in an official Government publication?

Leaving this problem, I pick up another official document. It is a portentous Blue Book of 358 pages; its title is as follows: "Correspondence relating to the Removal of Mr. A. P. Pennell from the Indian Civil Service." Mr. Pennell, it appears from the opening document, signed by Lord Curzon and others, was suspended from his office of District and Sessions Judge of Noakhali, in Bengal, for not referring to the High Court for the confirmation of a sentence of death he had passed upon a native whom he found guilty of murder. In consequence of this omission Mr. Pennell was suspended, and the Government of India justified the action taken by surveying Mr. Pennell's general career, with unflattering results. This official letter occupies seven and a half pages, and surely if, in deference to the opinion of friends at home and in justification of the Indian High Court's action, it was necessary to publish this report, the matter might have ended there, without printing in full the mass of correspondence, newspaper articles (such as one informing us that "Kankabathi was a dear girl who had gone to the middle of the river in a boat to drown herself"), witnesses' depositions, and a host of ordinary court documents connected with the case, which occupy the rest of the 358 long pages. The *dossier* of these documents might have

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been available for anyone who had an interest or title to examine them; but why go to the outrageous expense of printing them and scattering copies broadcast amongst the waste-paper baskets of members of Parliament and newspaper editors? It is safe to affirm that practically no one read them, and it would be interesting to know how many persons went to the King's Printers and paid the 2*s.* 10*d.* marked on the book as its price of sale.

Here is another Blue Book containing reports, with diagrams, about mines in the "Manchester and Ireland District No. 6." There is a profusion of information about all sorts of accidents in these mines, prosecutions, etc., which doubtless represents work which it was desirable for an inspector of mines to undertake, but which it was surely unnecessary to publish at length. The diagrams and the information could have been made available at the Home Office to anyone interested, without printing them and sending thousands of copies all over the country to persons who had no interest in reading them. I refer to this particular Blue Book because it is one of an almost endless series; these reports are annual, and they come from all parts of the country. The saving, therefore, if they were not printed and distributed, would be considerable, and no one would be a penny the worse.

Now I take up a small paper document from the Admiralty. It is a return to the House of Commons asked for by an Irish member "of expenses charged to the Government for medical attendance for each of the coastguard stations respectively in the districts of Youghal, Queenstown, Kinsale, Skibbereen, and Castletown, from the first day of January, 1900, to the first day of January, 1901, with the number of men at each station, and the name of the medical attendant." Inside we learn that at Ballyally, where five men are stationed, Dr. T. J. O'Meara received 2*s.* 6*d.* for medical fees; that at Schull, where six men are stationed, Dr. J. J. Twoling was not called upon for any services; whereas at Cross Haven the year's medical bill came to nearly £50. It is indeed difficult to know what the Irish member who asked for this return wanted the figures at all for; but it is still more difficult to understand why the return is printed and circulated broadcast; for though it is a small return, the printing and distributing charges were an item in the Government's printing bill.

One more quotation. In 1901 was published a report from the Select Committee on the Civil List, with the proceedings of the Committee as an Appendix. It is a foolscap-sized document of forty-six pages. Two of these pages were accidentally transposed. The Stationery Office, when the mistake was discovered, reissued the entire report with a slip explaining the reason. But why would not the slip itself have been sufficient? In point of fact, anyone who had occasion to study this report would soon have discovered for himself the mistake that had been made; but the explanatory slip would, in any case, have been quite sufficient, without a reprint of the entire document. It really seems as though the Government is anxious to spend as much money upon printing as it possibly can, and goes out of its way to devise means of increasing the bill.

I will leave further quotations for reasons of space; but if it were not for those reasons I could quote many more like examples, and that without searching beyond the matter lying ready to my hand. Guess,

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then, what would be the result of a full exposition of the whole series of Government publications!

I am not advocating cheeseparing economy or the indiscriminate cutting down of Government printing and the compilation of Government returns. In point of fact, the Government in some directions does not publish enough. There are numerous industrial statistics which it would be of great use to have collected and published. But the desirability of these further publications only makes it the more necessary that useless publications should be done away with. And it is clear that were these unnecessary publications abandoned, much useful information could be collected and imparted to the public through the Government, at the same time that the Stationery Office's total bill would be a great deal lower than at present.

The lines of reform are easy. First, Ministers should stiffen their backs against the constant and unnecessary demands for returns by private members. Where the compilation of the return appears to the Minister unnecessary, and would at the same time involve a considerable amount of labour and expense, the return should be refused. The member might grumble, but the Government would have the public with it, unless the member could make out a strong case of public interest. In other cases, where the mere compilation of a return would not involve much trouble or expense, or where the return would be of undoubted interest to certain persons, and is not of an unreasonable character, the Government might furnish the return in manuscript, hand it to the member asking for it, and leave it to him to give it further publicity at his own expense if he so desired. If in this latter case the return is of real public interest, the member can get all the publicity he desires by sending a few typewritten copies to the principal newspapers, whose editors will be glad enough of the cheap copy. Failing that, the member, if he still desires publicity, can obtain it by incorporating the matter of the return in a magazine article, a pamphlet, or a speech. This simple and businesslike reform would save the country scores of thousands of pounds each year.

FIRES IN THE CLEARING.

O! THE wild keen smell
Of the smoke that drifts on the hill;
It stirs my heart when there smoulders
A fire that can never be still.

At night the flames creep out
Like tigers, and prowl on the hill,
They slink in the underbrush,
They spring and are never still.

DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT.

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MARMADUKE DULCIMER,

CODICIL-FORGER.

By Henry A. Hering.*

Y name is Marmaduke Dulcimer. I am an unsuccessful business man, latterly doing a little insurance agenting for a bare living. My life for many years has been painfully monotonous, but a recent incident of a few hours' duration has furnished me with enough excitement to last for the remainder of my days, and to spare. The trouble arose in the first instance from my looks, for which I certainly am not responsible; in the second from—but perhaps I had better start at the beginning.

About twelve months ago I was one day in an omnibus bound for Charing Cross. At the corner of Chancery Lane, two individuals got in and seated themselves opposite. One of them stared very hard at me, and I stared very hard at him. I rubbed my eyes involuntarily, and he did the same. We were as alike as two peas. Had I not seen flesh and blood enter, I should have thought I was opposite a mirror. Our eyes met, and we couldn't help smiling.

"I think we ought to know each other," said my *vis-à-vis* pleasantly. "My name is Millbank—Edward Millbank, of Half-moon Street, Piccadilly."

"And mine is Marmaduke Dulcimer, of 57, Swadford Street, Pentonville Road," I replied, with equal good humour.

His companion, a sharp, professional-like man, who had looked at me with as much interest as the other, and who had lost no word of our short conversation, now broke in with "Here we are!"

"I'm sorry our interview has been so short, Mr. Dulcimer," said Mr. Millbank, standing up. "I hope our next may be longer. Good day to you."

"Good day, Mr. Millbank," I replied; and the two of them left the 'bus. The whole incident had not occupied five minutes.

So that was Edward Millbank, the millionaire, and my resemblance to him explained why from time to time some prosperous-looking individual whom I had never seen before would nod me a cheery greeting, or some black-coated cleric raise his hat. It had often puzzled me, and now I knew the reason. What an absurd thing, that Providence, while endowing us with practically identical bodies, had been so one-sided in her bankers' balances!

Some months later, on entering a third-class compartment on the Underground, a young man in a corner seat changed his casual glance at me into a most interested stare. Our eyes met as I took a seat, and he resumed his paper; but on glancing from mine a few minutes later, I found him intently watching me. Evidently feeling an explanation was necessary, he said—

"You must forgive me, sir, but your likeness to a relation of mine is so striking that at first sight I thought you must be he. Had I not known that he is in America, I should have addressed you."

"You mean Mr. Millbank?"

"Yes," he nodded.

I certainly should not have guessed the relationship. He did not at all look like a millionaire's nephew, a millionaire, moreover, who had no children of his own. Then I remembered that the terms of Mr. Millbank's will were public property. He had left the whole of his immense wealth to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to go towards the extinction of the National Debt. If he had so little posthumous interest in his relatives, perhaps he was also indifferent to their welfare during life. The shabbily dressed young man reading the sporting paper opposite seemed to show this was the case.

I got out at King's Cross, and the young man did the same. I felt he was following me, so was hardly surprised when he joined me just as I was branching off the Pentonville Road

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"You must forgive my abruptness, sir," he said, "but your most extraordinary likeness to my uncle has made me take to you amazingly."

"I am very much flattered," I replied; "but as you have no marked resemblance to any popular member of my own family, I don't feel able to return the affection."

"I think you might grow to care for me," said the young man earnestly. "I'm nobody's enemy but my own, and I have many accomplishments. I can play the zither, and my imitation of the cuckoo is something remarkable. Just listen," and Mr. Millbank's nephew deflated his cheeks.

"For Heaven's sake don't do it here!" I cried. "I live in this street, and don't wish to be made ridiculous. Some other day we may meet in the country, and I'll listen to you then. Good afternoon."

We had reached my lodgings. I opened the door and then closed it in the young man's face. It was rude, perhaps, but there seemed to be no other way of getting rid of him.

But I was not destined to see the last of him then. On the following Tuesday night the maid-of-all-work of the establishment flung open my door and announced "Mr. Bryden, sir"; and in walked Mr. Millbank's nephew.

The only emotion I showed was astonishment, but he was not at all disconcerted by the coolness of my reception.

"I've come to see when you'd care to go," he said gaily.

"Go! Where?"

"To have a day in the country. Don't you remember the engagement you made last Saturday?"

"Now look here, Mr.—er—Bryden," I replied. "I don't know you, and I don't know why you are forcing yourself upon me. Perhaps you will explain."

Mr. Millbank's nephew was plainly disappointed. "I hope I haven't offended you, Mr. Dulcimer," he said. "I shouldn't wish to, above all things. I assure you my liking for you is simply the result of your extraordinary resemblance to my uncle. I have the greatest affection for him, but he will not give me the chance of showing it. You would indeed confer a favour, if you would allow me to transfer it to you, and I would do my best to repay the obligation. All I ask is to be allowed to call on you occasionally. If you are fond of music, I'll bring my zither, and I really would like you to hear my cuckoo-call."

There was so much sincerity in his tones that I didn't like to turn him out. And indeed I was somewhat lonely, for my old friends had either died or had fallen away with my fortunes. Moreover, I was musical. If he liked to come to chat and play, he could do so. Should any ulterior motive appear behind his overtures, I could at any time stop the acquaintanceship. Thus did I reason with myself, and as a result I told him to sit down; and he entertained me so much with his talk that I was really sorry when he went. Two evenings afterwards he brought his zither to cement our friendship, and on the Sunday we went into the country, where Bryden gave his cuckoo-calls, which I am bound to admit were marvellously like the real thing.

Our intimacy increased apace. He generally looked in two or three times a week, and we often spent Sunday together. One night I happened to tell him of the attention I excited when I went in certain directions, and at our next meeting he asked me if I would mind his accompanying me to these quarters. So one day, attired in our best, we walked from Aldgate by way of the Mansion House to St. James's Street. It was like a Royal Progress. Twelve clergymen—two of them in aprons—twenty-one other male pedestrians, and ten ladies saluted me, and I lost count of interchange of courtesies with vehicular friends. Fifteen times was I stopped, and nine of these stoppages were in the nature of subscriptions, which I promised to send. I denied my identity with Mr. Millbank the first time, but was met with a look of such pained disbelief that I had not the courage to do so again. By the time we had got to the Law Courts, I had promised Bryden to introduce him as my nephew to the next comer, who happened to be the Bishop of Whitechapel. It seemed there had been some delay with a peal of bells I was sending him. I promised that my secretary should attend to the matter at once, and we were both asked to the episcopal garden-party of the following week. A Cabinet minister nodded to me in Trafalgar Square, and Bryden declared that a very charming lady who bowed was the leading star at the Gaiety, but this I refused to believe.

Altogether we had a very exciting walk. Bryden wanted me to repeat it often, as it would add to his social status were it known he was on such friendly terms with his uncle. We went out once again; but when I found that he was getting credit for some clothes at a tailor's shop in Bond Street on the

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strength of my waiting outside for him, I told him I could do no more in that direction, and a coolness resulted. For some weeks I saw nothing of him.

It was on the night of the eventful eighth of September when I saw him next. My landlady had taken advantage of having only one lodger on her hands at the moment to pay a visit of a few days to a relative in Norfolk, and I was alone in the house. I made my own bed and had my meals at Mr. Lockhart's establishment. Reduced terms made up for any little inconvenience I suffered.

"'I think we ought to know each other.'"

There was a tap at the window—Bryden's signal. I opened the door to him. He was strangely excited.

"Dulcimer," he said, as soon as he was in my sitting-room, "Uncle Millbank died to-night—an hour ago!"

"I'm sorry to hear the news. It will be a bad job for you if what we know of his will is correct."

"A beastly bad job. So much so that if you do not help me, I shall be in the workhouse in a month. I have nothing in the world but the miserable pittance he allowed me, which he said would stop with his life."

"But how can I help you? You know I can barely pay my own way."

"I don't mean that sort of help," said Bryden. Then he drew his chair nearer to mine and lowered his voice. "Sir William Cheedle saw him this afternoon and said there was no immediate danger. Nobody knows that he is dead but Mossman, his personal doctor who lives in the house, his valet Claxton, and myself."

"But what of that? The whole world will know of it to-morrow."

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"Before then he must have made another will."

"I'm afraid I don't understand you," I answered. "You said that Mr. Millbank is dead."

Bryden laid his hand upon my arm and looked at me with a strange, nervous expression on his face.

"Yes, uncle is dead, but you are not," he said.

In a moment it all flashed upon me. He wanted me to impersonate his uncle.

"You wish me to commit forgery!" I gasped.

"I'll make it worth your while."

"How?"

"By the will you must make to-night in my uncle's bed you leave me fifty thousand pounds. Mossman and Claxton will be paid for their assistance, and you shall have ten thousand pounds for your share of the trouble."

Ten thousand pounds! My brain reeled at the thought. To be free from the ever-present care that gnawed at my heart and took all pleasure out of life! To be independent—nay, to be rich—and all by a stroke of the pen! But——

Bryden watched me keenly. "There's no time to be lost," said he. "We have put uncle in the dressing-room. You must return with me at once. Claxton has the coast clear. The moment you are there we shall send for Greyson—uncle's regular lawyer—and you will have to dictate a fresh will to him. There's no need to say much, and what you do say you can speak in whispers. You will have to sign your name, of course, but any sort of a scrawl will do, as you are so ill. I've brought you a few of his signatures which you had better copy, so that you may get somewhere near them. When Greyson is safely away, we shall smuggle you out and put uncle back in bed. Claxton will raise the alarm in the morning when he comes to waken him as usual. You see, everything fits like a glove. You won't have much to do, and you'll be paid ten thousand pounds for doing it."

"But it's forgery," I expostulated.

"It's something like it," Bryden admitted, "but you don't attempt to copy his signature exactly. A smart counsel might get you off on that ground if it came to a trial, but I don't see how it could. We are going to square Greyson," he added triumphantly.

"It was like a Royal Progress. Twelve clergymen—two of them in aprons."

"Square Greyson!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, old man, that's a master-stroke, and you it is must do it. You must lead up to it touchingly. Tell him you always intended to remember him, and put him down for a thousand. See how he takes it. Double it if you don't think one enough, or he doesn't. We can afford to be liberal at times like these. That will clinch the matter. Even if he smelt a rat, he'd never upset the will after that. Here are the autographs. Just try your hand at a few copies."

I looked at them critically. It was a singularly boyish hand, with no flourishes or other complications. I made half-a-dozen attempts and finally arrived at a very passable imitation—quite good enough, Bryden said, for a man who had one leg on the other side of eternity. "Come along now," he added,

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"we'll get a cab as soon as we are a safe distance away."

"But I haven't agreed," I expostulated.

"Come on, you old josser!" said Bryden. "It isn't the time for agreeing. It's acting we want now."

And I went.

Thus weakly and easily did I allow myself to be persuaded into a line of conduct which it would be impossible to excuse. The only explanation I can offer is that I was very hard up at the time, and likely to be more so in the immediate future. The work of an hour or two would place me in the possession of ten thousand pounds which would otherwise have gone to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It wouldn't hurt the dead man, and why should I consider the Chancellor's feelings? He had never consulted mine. Everybody got at him if they could.

I thought all this over as we bowled along in the cab. I can't say I altogether satisfied myself that I was doing right, but my prospects were so gloomy that I almost did so.

At last we reached the house. A solemn and highly respectable-looking individual at once appeared in the doorway.

"Claxton," explained Bryden.

We followed him upstairs without a word and without meeting a soul. Finally we reached the bedroom—a large apartment with a four-poster bedstead. There was a door at the far side—the dressing-room, I reflected.

A sandy-bearded man jumped up as we entered.

"Dr. Mossman," said Bryden. We bowed and shook hands.

"It is, indeed, a remarkable resemblance," said he. "I have seen you in the street with Ned, and was therefore prepared for it; but I declare you gave me quite a start. For the moment I thought it was——" and he glanced towards the dressing-room.

"Now, Claxton, you must send for Mr. Greyson at once. Send Collins to his house and the wire to his club. Mr. Dulcimer, I must trouble you to change. I'll put your clothes in this recess, so that they'll be handy. Bryden, you'd better go altogether. Don't turn up again till you read the news in to-morrow's papers."

I must confess the doctor's authoritative and businesslike methods gave me confidence. I followed his instructions, and in ten minutes I was clad in Mr. Millbank's night-things, and in his bed. Then Dr. Mossman powdered my face and rubbed it in, to produce the melancholy effect desirable. "There," he said, when he had done, "if you are not Mr. Millbank, I don't know who you are."

"But suppose Mr. Greyson doesn't think so?" I urged, for, to tell the truth, I was horribly nervous.

"Don't dream of such a thing," said Mossman. "It isn't within the range of probability. For Heaven's sake keep your pecker up! You have all the cards in your hand. There's no need to throw one away. By the by, I suppose Ned has posted you up about the Millbank family?"

"No, not particularly. He has mentioned various members of it from time to time."

"Confound him, then, for a fool! You ought to have the family tree at your finger ends. Listen to me. The late Mr. Millbank had three brothers and five sisters—John, James, Rupert, Mary, Elizabeth——" and on he went. I didn't attempt to follow him after the first sentence. I was still grappling with that when I found he was in the middle of the next. I heard his voice meandering on, but my mind refused to understand his words. The situation was too much for me. For years I had lived an absolutely monotonous existence, unbroken by a single startling incident. I had just managed to pay my way, and had always been a law-abiding citizen, and yet here was I transformed at an hour's notice into a criminal, taking part in a scene better suited for the theatre than real life—in a dead man's clothes, in a dead man's bed, about to commit forgery—and the stakes ten thousand pounds or penal servitude. No wonder I was unnerved. I gave up listening to the doctor. I dimly felt he was questioning me, but I made no reply. Evidently he gave it up in despair, and trusted to luck to pull us through. For a while—it might have been minutes or hours—there was silence. Then the door opened.

"Mr. Greyson, sir," whispered the discreet Claxton.

The doctor held up a warning finger and advanced to meet him.

"Mr. Millbank wished to see you, Mr. Greyson," I heard him say. Then in reply to a question: "I hope not. Cheedle saw him this afternoon, and doesn't anticipate any serious development—not immediately, at any rate. Still, I thought it better to send for you, even at this late hour, as Mr. Millbank has asked for you several times."

"Quite right. Is he awake now?"

The doctor came over to the bedside

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leaned over me. "Mr. Greyson is here, sir," he said.

I nodded feebly and stretched out my hand. I felt a gentle pressure and opened my eyes. So that was Greyson. The face seemed familiar, yet I couldn't say where I had seen it before. But there was no time for speculation. I had my part ready and must say it.

"Sorry to trouble you, Greyson, but I'm done for this time. They are trying to keep it back from me; but I know, I know."

"Nonsense, Mr. Millbank," said Greyson cheerily. "You'll live to dance on my grave yet. But I mustn't trouble you with talking. You wanted to see me, did you not?"

I nodded.

"Perhaps Mr. Millbank would rather we were alone, doctor," said Mr. Greyson.

I inwardly thanked him for the suggestion. Mossman's presence flustered me. I saw he didn't like leaving the room, but there was no help for it after Greyson's remark.

"Now, sir," said the lawyer, when the door had closed behind the reluctant Mossman.

"I'm rather bothered about my nephew, Ned Bryden," I said in a whisper scarcely more than audible. "He's Mary's son, after all!"

"Elizabeth's," corrected Greyson.

"Elizabeth's. Did I say Mary? I can't concentrate my thoughts, Greyson, somehow. Yes, Ned is Elizabeth's boy, as you say, and I don't want to leave him penniless. The Chancellor won't miss it, you know."

"The Chancellor?" queried Greyson.

"The Chancellor of the Exchequer."

"Oh! the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He won't miss it, as you say. How much did you think of leaving to your nephew?"

"What do you say to fifty thousand pounds?"

"It's a nice round sum," he said absently.

"I'd have made it a hundred if he had behaved well; but you know he hasn't."

"Forty thousand might be ample," suggested Greyson, with what seemed to me unnecessary officiousness.

"He doesn't deserve anything, Greyson—not a red cent! I know that well enough; but for Mary's sake"—confound it, I'd boggled the name again!—"I'll leave him fifty thousand."

"Elizabeth," again corrected Greyson.

But I was warming up to the work now.

"I said Mary!" I retorted. "His aunt Mary was my favourite sister. It's for her sake I am doing this."

"Ah!" said Greyson. Then after a pause: "Do you wish me to prepare a codicil giving effect to your wishes?"

"I do; and I want it done at once. I wish it to be signed and witnessed now. If you want, you can prepare a more official document to-morrow, and I'll sign that afresh; but I shouldn't rest easy to-night if Ned were not provided for."

Greyson hunted round for writing material, which Mossman had taken care should be at hand. In a very few minutes he had drafted a codicil embodying my wishes.

"That's right, Greyson," I said, when he had read it over to me. "And now I want you to add something more. I'm not going to forget you."

Greyson started. He evidently had not expected this.

"I'd much rather you did not leave me anything, sir," he said. "It would be somewhat irregular under the circumstances, and might look like undue influence."

"Nonsense, man!" I said. "You shall read it over to the witnesses—Mossman and Claxton will do—and I'll tell them I wanted it. You may put yourself down for one thousand pounds."

Greyson hesitated. Then he turned to the bed, and leaning over me, said: "Make it two."

The coolness of the man staggered me. There was never a word of thanks, only this audacious request. I looked into his face. It was unreadable.

"All right, Greyson," I answered, after a moment's pause, "you may put yourself down for two thousand pounds. Then call Mossman and Claxton, or anyone else, as witnesses. Get it over quickly. I'm tired."

For a few minutes the lawyer scribbled away. Then he went to the door, called Mossman, and explained matters. In another minute Claxton followed the doctor into the room, and Greyson addressed them—

"I wish you both to witness a codicil that I have drawn up at Mr. Millbank's request. Under the circumstances of the case, it would be better that I should first read over the terms, so that you should hear Mr. Millbank's assent to them. You wish that, sir?" he added to me.

"I do, Greyson."

He read the codicil out aloud. I can't repeat the legal jargon. All I remember is that out of my love and affection for my nephew, Ned Bryden, I left him fifty thousand pounds of the money that would otherwise have gone to the Chancellor of the

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Exchequer, and furthermore, that in consideration for long and faithful services, I left George Greyson the sum of three thousand pounds.

"Three!" I couldn't help ejaculating.

"I think that was the figure you mentioned, sir," said Greyson firmly. "I can make it less if you wish it."

What an unprincipled scoundrel the man was! He evidently believed his client was too weak to demur at any suggestion on his part, and he was taking deliberate advantage of the situation. But I couldn't afford to annoy him by opposition.

"Three thousand. Quite right," I promptly replied. "You hear, Mossman?

"No need—just now," said Greyson, buttoning up his coat. "Good night, Mr. Millbank. I hope you will feel easier for this night's work. Don't trouble, doctor; Claxton will show me out."

"Well done!" said Mossman, when the door had closed behind them. "Capital—capital! I didn't think you could have pulled it off so well!" And he rubbed his hands gleefully. Then, as I prepared to rise: "No; lie quite still. He might come back." He opened the door and leaned over the banisters till there came the sound of the front door being closed. "There!" he said, "he's left the house now, but you'd better not follow him for some time.

"'Now, Mr. Millbank, will you please sign?'"

I wish to leave Mr. Greyson three thousand pounds."

"I hear, sir," said Mossman.

"Now, Mr. Millbank, will you please sign?" said Greyson, bringing me the document and a pen. I stretched out my hands feebly for them and affixed a scrawling signature to the codicil. "I'm afraid this wouldn't have done without witnesses," said Greyson, examining it critically. "Now, doctor, your signature, please, and yours, Claxton."

While they signed, I sank back as if exhausted by the excitement. Mossman came to my side and felt my pulse.

"It has been rather too much for my patient, Mr. Greyson," he said. "I don't think I would trouble him any further."

He might be strolling up and down outside. Better run no risks, however remote. I should stay where you are for half an hour or so, in case by any chance he came back. Then dress yourself leisurely. I'll come up for you when I think you might go."

For quite half an hour I remained there, basking in the thought that now I was rich beyond the wildest dreams of my later years. I could live in luxury for the remainder of my days, and never have a tremor about the possibilities of the morrow. I could travel if I wished and see the show places of the Old World and the New. The universe was at my command to the extent of ten thousand pounds, but for the present I would content myself with buying a new silk hat and giving notice at 57, Swadford Street.

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Then I got up and dressed myself slowly, and as I did so my mind reverted to Greyson. What a scamp the man was, to presume on the weakness of a client for his own benefit! I had heard of similar ends being accomplished by insidious suggestion, but never in the cool, deliberate manner practised by Greyson that night. Then my thoughts ran to Bryden. Would he pay me the ten thousand pounds? Of course he would. How curious it was we should both have become rich through a casual meeting in a train! Singular, too, that I should have met his uncle in a similar fashion. Heavens! I had met Greyson before. I knew I had. He was with Mr. Millbank that day in the 'bus. He had heard my voice, had heard me give my name and address to Mr. Millbank. Cold beads of perspiration stood on my forehead. Then perhaps he suspected who I was. Of course he did. The cool way in which he had raised my bequest from one to three thousand pounds was his method of showing his power. He knew he could make his own terms, and he had made them. But, after all, was it not better it should be so? There was now less reason than before to anticipate opposition on his part. We had bought his silence. The only singular thing about it was that we had bought it so cheaply. There might be danger, after all. The sooner I got out of the house, the better. Ah! what was that? A noise in the dressing-room where *it* was? Nonsense! I was all nerves and imagination.

I was reaching down my coat from a hook in the curtained recess where Mossman had placed it, when again I heard the noise. I glanced over my shoulder. The dressing-room door was slowly opening. I could have shrieked aloud, but horror paralysed my very being. I tried to move, to make a rush from the room, but I could not stir. Terror glued me to the floor—and the dressing-room door was still opening. What opened it was unseen.

Then from the other side the form of Mr. Millbank appeared, deathly pale, clad in a nightshirt. I shrank instinctively from the ghastly sight, and by a supreme effort drew my feet into the recess and let the curtain fall in front of me. Yet, horror-stricken as I was, I watched from out a corner.

It was Millbank returned from the dead, Millbank in flesh and blood! He seemed to be walking in his sleep, staring fixedly before him. He stopped in the middle of the room and hesitated. The bed with the clothes turned down attracted his attention. He walked to it, got in, covered himself up, and shut his eyes.

Then the desperate nature of my position dawned upon me. Mr. Millbank was not dead, after all. He must have been in a trance, and I had forged his signature to a codicil. Everything would come out in the morning. Greyson would—no, Greyson was ours; I had bought Greyson. But I had committed forgery, and all for no good. Penal servitude for nothing! What a fool I had been to listen to Bryden! But what was the good of vain regrets? I must get out of the house. I peered round the corner of the curtain. Mr. Millbank was evidently asleep. Dared I venture across the floor? I had got one leg out to make the attempt, when—what was that? Was I dreaming in some mad nightmare, or what? That was Bryden's cuckoo-call, loud and distinct. Nonsense! Yes, there it was again. It must be the bird itself. Ridiculous! Cuckoos in Piccadilly! Then it was Bryden; but what did it mean?

I listened intently, but other sounds now fell on my ears. Footsteps and voices. Then footsteps again, and the quick turn of the door-handle, and in walked Greyson. Behind him were two others, one of whom advanced to the bed and laid a heavy hand on Mr. Millbank's shoulder. "Marmaduke Dulcimer," he said, "I arrest you in the King's name on a charge of forgery."

Mr. Millbank was wide awake now. He leaned on his arm and stared in amazement at the intruders.

"Get up, Dulcimer," said Greyson.

The millionaire seemed in a haze. "Why do you call me by that absurd name? I am Edward Millbank," he said.

"We know who you are," replied Greyson, "so there's no need to play the fool. Get up. We've a cab waiting below."

"You must either be mad or drunk, Greyson—or both," said Mr. Millbank slowly.

"Don't be impertinent, Dulcimer," said Greyson. "Sergeant, you'd better pull him out."

"You touch me at your peril!" cried Millbank. "Claxton! Claxton!"

"Claxton has run away," said Gregson.

"Run away!" repeated Millbank, in astonishment. "Where's Mossman?"

"He's in charge of a constable below. Now, will you come quietly, or shall we make you?"

"I don't know what your motive is, George Greyson," said the millionaire

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"The form of Mr. Millbank appeared."

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sternly, "but if there's law in England, you shall suffer for this night's work."

"What a man you are!" said Greyson in genuine admiration. "I've had to do with many consummate scoundrels in my time, but never with one like you. But we can't stop here all night. Will you come quietly or not?"

"Since you seem to wish it particularly, I will," replied Mr. Millbank grimly, "for I don't feel well enough to struggle. Bring my clothes, please."

It was an awful moment. Greyson had already made a step in the direction of the recess in which I was concealed, when he caught sight of a wardrobe opposite. He changed his mind, walked to that, opened it, and found some clothes. In a quarter of an hour Mr. Millbank was dressed.

"Now, gentlemen, I'm quite ready to go with you," he said, "if you still persist in this outrage."

"We do—very much so," replied Greyson.

Without another word the millionaire turned, and with the officer's arm in his, left the room, and so downstairs. I watched two cabs drive away, and then fled down the steps and into the street. Thirty-five minutes enabled me to reach Swadford Street. I let myself in, and went straight to bed with a throbbing brow and an aching heart.

Sleep was, of course, impossible, and instead of cursing my criminal foolishness I tried to arrive at a just idea of my own position. Surely it was not so dangerous, after all, although Claxton had bolted. No one but Bryden was likely to have seen me leave the house; no one was likely to have seen me return. My habits were notoriously methodical, and who was to prove I had been on that mad errand in Piccadilly if only Mossman kept his head?

While I was striving to this conclusion there was a loud knocking at the front door. I let it continue for some time before I took any notice. Then I opened the window and looked out. There was a gas-lamp immediately in front of the house. Its light fell on Greyson. Behind him was a policeman, and a cab was drawn up a few yards away.

"So you've managed to get back," said the lawyer, in tones that showed his bitter disappointment.

"What do you mean?" I asked. "I am always here at this time."

"We'll see how long you have been in to-night, anyway," said Greyson. "I wish to speak to your landlady."

"She's visiting her uncle Benjamin at Yarmouth," I replied, "and I'm quite alone in the house; but if you'll leave your name, I'll tell her you called."

"Then if she is out, perhaps your friend Bryden will be able to give us the information we require," said Greyson sarcastically. "If you don't open the door, we shall be obliged to use force."

"My dear sir," I replied, my spirits rising with the forlornness of his hope, "force is unnecessary. I enter my protest against your summary proceeding, but as soon as I can find my trousers I'll come down."

I let them in, and they searched every room, every corner and cupboard in the place—of course, in vain.

"I told you she wasn't here," I said, when at last they gave up their fruitless quest. "She said she was going to see her uncle Benjamin. I do hope she hasn't done anything very wrong. I always took her for a most respectable person."

If a glare could have killed me, I should have died upon the spot. Then the lawyer turned on his heels and left the house; the policeman followed. They got into the cab, slammed the door, and drove away.

A great joy filled my heart. Surely I was safe. If Greyson had had anything more than suspicion to go upon, he would have acted on the warrant he had taken out against me. Mossman had kept his head—I might have known he would—but he must have been astonished beyond measure when he found out who his fellow prisoner was. At the police-station Greyson had no doubt discovered the mistake he had made, and had come straight to Swadford Street to redeem his reputation by catching me red-handed. I had saved my skin by my speedy return, and the absence of my landlady had destroyed his last hope of evidence against me.

And that is all, so far as I am concerned. Mossman was no doubt released, as no proceedings were taken against the principal offender, but from that night to this I have never seen him or any of the other actors in that Piccadilly drama, though I am well aware that Mr. Greyson's detectives shadowed me for long enough in the hope of some such meeting.

I opened the next morning's papers with much perturbation, fully expecting to see in great headlines:—

EXTRAORDINARY AFFAIR.

ARREST OF A MILLIONAIRE BY HIS SOLICITOR ON A CHARGE OF

FORGING HIS OWN SIGNATURE.

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But I was overjoyed to find the papers were absolutely silent on the subject.

And now for the most surprising event in a sequence of surprises. Mr. Millbank had not left his money to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, after all. He died the following February, leaving a will dated some years before, and a codicil signed the week after the events above described.

By the will, which left the bulk of the immense fortune for the furtherance of Antarctic exploration, Ned Bryden had a legacy of ten thousand pounds bequeathed him, Dr. Mossman two thousand pounds, and Claxton one thousand pounds.

By the codicil Ned's legacy was revoked, while the other three thousand pounds was transferred to "George Greyson, of Lincoln's Inn Fields, solicitor, as a token of esteem for faithful service on the eighth of September last."

It is evident that, little as I suspected it, I have the making of a criminal in me. Opportunity alone is required for its development. I can only hope that the recollection of the narrow escape I have had will keep me in the path of virtue should temptation again arise.

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THE LESSON.

FROM A WATER COLOUR BY R. ANNING BELL.

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THE TOWN OF AVOCH, BLACK ISLE.

THE BLACK ISLE.

DESCRIBED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY
HENRY HARBOUR.

THERE are not a few things that ought to be renamed. The Black Isle is one of them, for it is neither black nor an isle. A glance at a map of Scotland will show that the district in question is a peninsula situated a little to the north of Inverness. Unfortunately, the map will not show that the term "black" is as libellous as "isle" is inappropriate. If you could meet with one that presented the Black Isle in its true colours, you would see that in due season it is green with the foliage of many trees, rich herbage, and springing crops; that it is a peaceful, restful, healthful tract; and that, when the summer sun is in the sky, it is an ideal land for the man with a fagged brain or a weary body.

Most visitors make their headquarters at Fortrose or Rosemarkie, two adjacent diminutive towns whose origin is lost in the mists of antiquity, and that can look back on days of greatness and renown. Fortrose is the terminus of a short branch railway which at its other extremity is connected with the main line between Inverness and the north of Scotland.

There was a time in the history of Fortrose when it was a cathedral city and one of the chief seats of learning in the country. For a cathedral the church was small, but it was a gem. A great part of the once glorious structure was carried off to Inverness, there to be used by the builders of Cromwell's fort. Its style of architecture was the purest and most elaborate "middle pointed," and the marvellous beauty of the mouldings is still apparent in the portion that has hitherto defied Time and other despoilers. The chapter-house is a part of that which has escaped destruction, and is now used as the Town Hall and Council Chamber.

Just a mile from the ruined cathedral is the church of Rosemarkie, a burgh that claims to be older than Fortrose, but now may be taken as a thriving suburb of its sister, for villas are arising to meet the wants of its summer patrons. Both towns are on the coast, but Rosemarkie has by far the better frontage to the sea, its beach being of firm, clean sand and serving as the bathing-ground of the district. Of course, the golfers are in evidence. They exercise their skill on a spit of land that extends like a long finger into the Firth.

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FORTROSE CATHEDRAL.

From Rosemarkie you step into the Fairy Glen, the goal of picnic parties, where a tumbling stream and thickly clustering trees and flowers and ferns combine to make the ravine worthy of its name.

A walk by the coast brings you to the Eathie Burn, that flows through a secluded dell of great beauty, and famed as the scene of Hugh Miller's early discoveries. His "Schools and Schoolmasters" is a book that must not be omitted from the literary provision made for a holiday in the Black Isle.

The Eathie Burn is but a short walk from the town of Cromarty, which has the honour of being Hugh Miller's birthplace, and which fittingly celebrated the centenary of the birth of its famous son last August. The low, thatched cottage in which he was born is carefully preserved, and is annually visited by hundreds of hero-worshippers. In one of the rooms there are exhibited fossils that he collected, some of his manuscripts, and letters that he received from Ruskin, Carlyle, Darwin, and other eminent persons. Adjoining the cottage is a larger house, in which he lived for many years. It was built for his father, but was never inhabited by him, as he was drowned on the voyage that was immediately to precede his removal to the new home. On high ground hard by is a lofty pillar surmounted by Hugh Miller's effigy.

Cromarty is one of the many towns that have seen better days. Centuries ago it was a royal burgh, but when times got bad the privileges conferred by the position did not compensate for the financial burdens that came with the honour; and so in 1672 it petitioned to be struck off the list, and its prayer was granted. Once a flourishing port, it is now a quiet, sleepy little place, in which the arrival and departure of the mail-

FAIRY GLEN, NEAR ROSEMARKIE.

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ROSEHAUGH.

car that runs to and from Fortrose, the coming and going of the tiny steam-launch that maintains communication with the railway at Invergordon on the opposite side of the bay, and, still more, the movements of the larger steamers that regularly call, are events of prime importance.

From the windows of its chief hotel, a model of cleanliness and of sweet reasonableness in its charges, you look straight down into the superb inlet that bears the name of the town, and across the western shore until your vision is bounded by the huge bulk of Ben Wyvis, some twenty miles away. The inlet is the pride of Cromarty and the delight of its boat-loving visitors. It is deep enough to float great battleships, large enough to hold a navy, and as safe as a haven can be. The narrow entrance is guarded by two lofty headlands called the Sutors, and said to be the petrified remains of a couple of gigantic shoemakers who had but one last, which they were wont to throw to each other across the strait.

The hill on the south, or Cromarty side, is one of the points to which visitors to Cromarty make their way, for the sake of the exquisite view that the summit affords.

HUGH MILLER'S BIRTHPLACE, CROMARTY.
(The thatched cottage on the left.)

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Leading to the top are paths made by Mr. George Ross, "the Scotch agent," referred to by Junius as the worthy confidant of Lord Mansfield. Ross bought the estate, and set himself to develop it and to render Cromarty "worth while for a Londoner to visit." The town is that; but its attractions are those with which Nature has endowed it, and the associations that centre in a certain small thatched cottage.

But all that is of interest in the Black Isle is not found in Fortrose or the country to the east of it. One of the most picturesque bits in the peninsula extends along the coast westward to the little town of Avoch. And Avoch itself is not attractive only for the beauty of the scenery in its vicinity. It appeals to those with antiquarian tastes as the site of the Castle of Ormond that "gave styles to sundry earls, and last to the princes of Scotland." And then within view of Avoch is the large and ornate mansion of Rosehaugh, upon which fabulous sums of money have been spent. On high ground it stands, backed by noble pine woods and fronted by broad acres where browse the famous herds and studs of the home farm.

Then, again, away in the west are Tarradale House, in which Sir Roderick Murchison, the great geologist, was born, and Kilcoy Castle and Red Castle, the last-named being of interest as one of the oldest inhabited mansions in the north, and also from its historical associations. It is said to have been built in 1179 by William the Lion; Queen Mary is said to have graced it by her presence; and in the troublous days of the Commonwealth it was set on fire by Cromwell's men. It is now one of the seats of Mr. J. E. B. Baillie, of Dochfour, and has been greatly improved by him.

Before the opening of its railway in 1894, the Black Isle suffered from its comparative inaccessibility, as well as from the prejudice aroused by its name. It has now only the latter to contend against, and that will slowly but surely vanish.

"HIGHLANDERS."
A photographic study by Charles Reid, Wishaw.

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THE VOICE OF THE TURTLE.

By B. A. CLARKE.

N Claude Tyrell's younger days it was a constant grief to him that everything seemed tame—everything, that is, touching his own life. There were wild beasts and men in existence, but the possibility of meeting these seemed the privilege of a few happy souls. It was not a question of age or merit. Boys younger than himself had been chased by wolves or happily kidnapped by Red Indians; and, on the other hand, men like his father and uncles (quite excellent men) were as badly circumstanced as himself. On one morning in particular was this feeling strong upon him. He was standing at the top of a flight of cast-iron steps looking down at the gardens, and feeling vaguely conscious that for his despondency the scene was largely responsible. A line of thin, grey houses—none boasting even the quasi-distinction of semi-detachment—stretched away on both sides interminably, and the strips of gardens belonging to them were depressing to a degree. The ideal was a yellow sea of new gravel, islanded by small circular flower-beds. There was a notable exception—the domain of two young bachelors, who, with no respect for Society's claim, used their garden for purposes of selfish gratification. Its width enabled them to swing hammocks from wall to wall, and in these they would recline of a summer's evening, as blissfully contented as though beneath were beds containing a dozen potted geraniums, instead of a wilderness of grass and weeds, into which, it was said, the neighbours' cats wandered and got lost.

Claude's eyes wearied of the conventional horticulture, with its tale of juvenile wrongs (most of the householders, if not gardeners themselves, were the cause of gardening in others), and dwelt restfully upon the wilderness.

Suddenly Claude's muscles stiffened. There was movement in the long grass, wild life was astir in the jungle. Then he caught a glimpse of a rocky body pushing a path through the vegetation. He sprang down the steps and swarmed over the wall.

A few minutes later, Mrs. Tyrell, from the dining-room window, saw her youngest son, six gardens away, carrying a tortoise. She lost sight of him in the lee of the wall. Suddenly the tortoise came flying into the air, and then the child's round face (purpled with the effort of climbing) appeared above the brickwork. The process was repeated five times. As he got nearer, his mother could appreciate the desperate efforts he had to put forth. Her own knees felt grated in sympathy.

"It is very cruel," she said, "to keep throwing that poor animal over the walls; but it is certain he could bring it in no other way."

With his prize in his arms, Claude rushed into the house and panted upstairs to the dining-room.

"I've caught him, mother! It's a wild tortoise!"

Dr. Wright, who was with Mrs. Tyrell, threw back his head and laughed heartily.

The light faded from Claude's face. In its way it was a pathetic thing to see the self-reliant hunter reduced in a second to timid childhood. He put the tortoise down on the carpet.

"Isn't it a wild tortoise?" he stammered.

"Not strictly a wild tortoise," said the doctor gravely; "but no doubt it is exceedingly annoyed. But let us see what your sister has to say to it," he added, Margaret's queer little jump being just then audible upon the staircase.

The little girl came running into the room, pushing back the hair from her face, a concession she invariably made to the presence of adults, from the notion that it anticipated criticism, and robbed it of some of its force.

"What do you think of this dangerous

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beast?" said the doctor. "Claude captured it six gardens from here."

At the sight of the prize, Margaret danced and clapped her hands.

"Oh, mother! a wild tortoise! Isn't Claude a clever boy?"

"It's a shame!" said the doctor hotly. He was realising what a pity it was that the juvenile point of view, that gives so much pleasure, must conform to the adult, that gives pleasure to no one.

"It is Mr. Roberts's tortoise," said Mrs. Tyrell. "Claude took it by mistake."

Margaret went on her hands and knees after the tortoise, which had taken cover under the sofa. She rose dusty and triumphant.

"Mother, I looked at it closely. It is as wild as ever it can be."

That was just the difference between the two children. When Margaret had a notion that pleased her, adult reasoning to the contrary could effect no lodgment in her mind. Claude, on the other hand, was always being brought up sharply. A word or smile from his elders showed him his doings as they appeared to them, but without the kindly allowance that was being made for his tender years.

"It is just like stealing a kitten," he said. "I dare say I shall get whacked."

"I wish it was me that had caught it," said Margaret stoutly.

"Claude must take it back this evening when Mr. Roberts is home," said Mrs. Tyrell. "And mind, Claude, you are to explain that you thought it was wild," she added, suspecting that her son would rather be thought criminal than over-young.

So in the evening Claude took back the wronged creature and made a stammering apology.

"Really now," said the elder brother, "when you come to think of it, the beast might very well have been a wild tortoise. Of course, in that case, it was likely to do an immense amount of damage, and the whole neighbourhood would be indebted to anyone hunting it down."

"If you see any other monsters in our garden," said the younger Mr. Roberts—"lions now, or any such fearful wild-fowl, don't hesitate to shoot."

His face was grave, but Claude could see the laugh in his throat.

"I know it was babyish thinking it was wild; but I am only seven."

"That's all right, old man," said the elder brother hastily. "We weren't making fun of you; and you can have the tortoise to keep."

"Don't throw it over any more walls, though," said the brother. "Remember, it is a Cheapside tortoise, and has been accustomed to a kind home."

Claude stole a shy, sideway glance at them. They were still inclined to laugh at him, he thought; and to be laughed at was the greatest calamity. He did not feel quite at ease until, with the tortoise in his arms, he was descending the front steps.

"Nice little beggar!" said the elder Mr. Roberts, closing the door.

When Claude returned, Margaret was triumphant.

"There," she said, "that proves it was wild!" Upon Mr. Roberts's pretended generosity she poured swift, feminine scorn. "If it wasn't wild, it was a pet; and do you think anyone would give away a pet to be thrown over walls?"

Under her influence Claude began to think that the day's doings had not been wholly amiss. Nothing could restore the first fine delusion; but he could see what a starting-point the capture was for conscious make-believe. And before long the tortoise was carrying upon its back a whole world of juvenile inventions.

It was with Margaret that they originated.

"Turtles upon the island!" she exclaimed suddenly. "Then at least we need not starve."

"From the tortoise you make tortoise-shell combs," said Claude. He mentioned also another manufacture, for he had drunk deep of the springs of juvenile lore, and was too young to have forgotten.

His sister, who had not been through a similar course, glanced at him approvingly. Hitherto she had let her younger brother accompany her imaginary adventures from necessity, because in whatever future she sketched he claimed a share.

"When I grow up, I shall be an adventuress," she said once.

"So shall I," said Claude promptly.

"But you can't be—boys can't be."

"I shan't be a boy."

What was the good of resisting such a child?

But now it struck her that Claude's company might be a real advantage. Since the coming of the tortoise she had definitely chosen as her career that of shipwrecked voyager, and, aided by Claude's knowledge of industrial processes, she saw that she could carry the art farther than had its

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"'No doubt it is exceedingly annoyed.'"

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most famous professors. They would have upon their island all the animals of the Swiss Family Robinson, and Claude would know the hundred articles to be made from their hoofs, horns, and hide. With the same thoroughness they would attack the plants and trees. But she thought it as well to put her brother's knowledge to a further test. She mentioned a few animals at random, and was told a dozen uses for each.

"Where did you learn all that?" she asked admiringly.

"At school. Everybody knows it."

"I don't believe papa knows it."

"Rats!" said Claude indignantly. The suggestion that there was anything outside his father's knowledge was, to him, almost wicked. However, Margaret tried the experiment at the tea-table, her father being present, and from the whole company she could not extract one half the information that her brother—at that moment solacing himself with golden syrup in the nursery—had volunteered. There was a visitor present, an elderly gentlemen, who, for all his grey beard, was not ashamed to confess that on these particular subjects he knew nothing.

"You see, my dear, I have had to give so much of my attention to tea"—he was a broker in Mincing Lane—"that my general education has suffered."

"But you know everything about tea," said Margaret kindly. Claude's superiority being proved, she did not wish to put anyone (least of all a visitor) to shame.

"No, my dear, not even all about tea."

This confession, astoundingly improbable as it seemed, was not exaggerated, for when Claude came in to say "Good-night," he beat the tea broker upon his own ground.

"This gentleman, Claude," said Mr. Tyrell, "has tea sent to him from all parts of the world."

"What kinds of tea?" asked Claude.

Mr. Tyrell named two at random, and Mr. Richards, the tea broker, added a half-dozen more.

"Does he get Shoo Shang tea sent him?"

Mr. Richards had never heard of this kind of tea; but Claude, who really understood the subject, persisted and described the method of cultivation, and when his statements were questioned, produced a tiny yellow-covered guide to knowledge, wherein everything was set down exactly as he had said.

"Why, bless my soul! so it is," said the tea broker. "What ignoramuses you young people must think us!"

That the information was likely to prove valuable to him in his business, was shown by his giving Claude a bright shilling. At least, so Margaret argued, and she realised more clearly than ever the enormous advantage that Claude's encyclopædic knowledge would be to her. She visited him that night when he was in bed, being anxious to get things definitely settled before anyone else snapped him up.

"When we are grown up, we really will go on adventures together," she said.

"Rather!" said Claude.

"You won't get married, or bring in anyone else; and I won't get married or bring in anyone else, either."

"All right," said Claude; "but we couldn't be certain of being shipwrecked. If we kept on going voyages, we'd be pretty sure to be."

"I shall be a woman before you are a man, but I'll just stop at home until you are ready."

"Thank you, Margaret."

Then they shook hands upon their agreement, binding themselves to one another by every form of solemn affirmation known to gently nurtured youth.

From that night they talked, when together, about little except their future home. A desert island, they called it, and at the outset it had been one; but played upon by youthful fancy, it had blossomed exceedingly, and was now producing astonishing flowers and fruit. To make the most of their resources, vegetable and animal, kept Claude constantly busy, and he used to object sometimes that the hunter and the fighter were being lost in the agriculturist and the manufacturer. It was so easy for Margaret to say that she had come upon a dead elephant, and to tell her brother to make the fullest use of it; but that is no small task, as anyone who understands elephants will admit; to say nothing of the impossible things she wanted carved from the ivory tusks.

Of course, all this dealing with things gave a wonderful charm to his sister's inventions, and Claude was not insensible to her praise; but it was hard to be kept at work, when she, gun on shoulder, was starting to explore some unvisited portion of their domain. Surely this was the man's privilege! But then Margaret was eighteen months his senior, and it was really very kind of her to have him at all.

"You are only a very little boy," she said on one occasion, when on account of her sex

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he attempted to put some disability upon her. If only all boys could be older than all girls, thought Claude, the world would be simpler and happier. But, as a matter of fact, Margaret was much the better explorer. Claude had eyes for little besides lions, and of these, as his sister complained, they had already more than met their needs.

"'When we are grown up, we really will go on adventures together.'"

Claude's tortoise remained the inspiration of their play, and they owed far more to it than they realised. Like the real objects in the foreground of a panorama, it gave solidity to all the rest. And, too, its existence was liable to none of the vicissitudes of their other island possessions. In the presence of unsympathetic adults it was not an atom less a tortoise (the stand-by of the shipwrecked mariner from time immemorial) than it had been previously. So long as the tortoise remained, they had not, after a period of immersion in the actual, to start their make-believe afresh. They had only to see it make one of its periodic dashes for liberty, and the whole romance was living. With flushed cheeks they darted in pursuit, and having turned the tortoise dexterously upon its back, they looked into one another's eyes and read there a great relief.

It was Margaret's desire to have another starting-point of reality that led her to think of building the house in the tree. The idea had fascinated her in "The Swiss Family Robinson," and she had always thought that the subject might have been treated at greater length. The only tree in the Tyrells' garden was a barren plum tree. It was a particularly unaccommodating tree, for its branches afforded no scope for a big boy, while its trunk necessitated too much swarming for the only kind of juvenile at all likely to utilise it. Claude had performed the feat once, and upon the strength of this discountenanced artificial aids. His earnestness had even impressed Margaret with the feeling that there was something essentially feminine and inferior in any suggestion of the kind. As against a house in a tree, however, the objection was without weight. One does not swarm up the side of a house; the most manly are not ashamed to make use of steps. Margaret resolved to make a perfectly easy ascent to the branches as a preliminary to the rest of the house-building. She did not mention her purpose to Claude, fearing that until the house was built, or at least begun, he might not be able to catch the right point of view. She waited, therefore, for a half-holiday, when he was going out.

When the opportunity came, the adventuress got from the tool-box a hammer and a handful of tenpenny nails. It was her intention to drive the latter into the trunk at

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intervals, making two parallel lines, and to support pieces of wood (split-up box-lids) upon these, thus making an approach at once handsome and safe. It would make the ascent quite easy if a skipping-rope were thrown over the lowest branch, the two ends hanging down.

With the implements and material in her pinafore, the little girl started down the garden. Her mother, with no notion what she was about, watched her go. To the end of Mrs. Tyrell's life the picture will be present to her. Not a day will pass without her seeing it. There is the thin and shabby strip of garden, the bright sunshine, and the child's dark curls rising and falling as she runs. The hat, of faded crimson plush, had been a best one, but had long since come down to garden use. High brown boots came well up the tight little legs. There is another picture that the mother sees only when she is compelled—the same figure lying upon the grass, and the clumsy St. Bernard pup solicitously licking her face. What length of time had intervened? It seemed to Mrs. Tyrell only a few minutes, but it must have been longer, for nails were found quite a distance up the tree.

Margaret was very white when the servants carried her in, and seemed averse from making any movement; but she suffered little, and the boys, who judged accidents by the test of bloodshed, were not overwhelmingly impressed. They were surprised when they came home to find that the doctor had been summoned.

Claude was the first to know the truth, and it was because his bedroom happened to be next to his sister's. Mr. Tyrell was not home until nearly midnight. Going into his daughter's room, he chanced to awaken the youngster. Claude waited for his father to emerge, but there was so much delay that he went out on to the landing and peeped through the crack of the door. Margaret slept, and his father, whose back was towards him, seemed asleep also. To see better, Claude pushed the door a little further open, thereby occasioning a slight squeaking. Mr. Tyrell turned round at the noise, and at the sight of his face Claude rushed back to his bed and drew the clothes over his head. He heard his father go downstairs, and at every leaden step his heart sank.

Margaret kept to her bed. She was weak and easily tired, and the doctor came every day. Otherwise, there was very little to indicate the dreadful thing that had happened. Max and Walter were optimistic, and spoke of seeing her running about in a week or two; but Claude *knew*, and although he spoke to no one upon the subject, his mind was exercised continually by the tragedy and by its bearing upon his own conduct. He was much in the sick-room, he and the tortoise—one of many hundreds that lay basking in the sun, he told his sister, for she took long views and liked to be assured that supplies were certain. The island game continued; but Claude played it now with a troubled conscience.

"We really will go voyages when we grow up," the invalid would say, more frequently now than before.

How could it be right to encourage her in such falsehoods? Margaret never could be an adventuress; so much, at least, was certain. If Claude went, it must be alone. But could he go alone? Did he even want to? He had resented his sister's domineering; but for all that, he had come to rely upon it. Besides, it was really Margaret's island, and there seemed something mean about occupying it in her absence. Without being clear as to his own preference, Claude resolved to interpret his compact with his sister generously, and to consider himself bound to her for life. This made it easy for him to meet an attack that was suddenly sprung upon him.

"You don't think I could go on lying here until I am a woman?" said Margaret.

"I dunno," replied Claude.

"Anyway, I'd be sure to get well some time."

"I suppose so," said Claude gloomily.

"You know I promised to wait for you until you were a man. That makes it only fair you should wait a year or two for me."

"I will wait for you," said Claude, "until you are thirty."

Margaret laughed. No children really believe that they will ever be thirty.

"But I bet I will soon be all right," she said; and the cloud over her spirits dispersed as quickly as it had gathered.

But for the rest of the family the prospect was darkening. The weeks slipped away, and with them the last faint hopes. Before burying them, Mr. Tyrell called in the services of a famous spine specialist. The physician arrived, and Margaret found the momentous interview—how momentous she did not guess—less formidable than she had feared. The great doctor was just a kindly old gentleman, and although she was a little frightened when he began to examine her, he talked so pleasantly that when he took

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his leave (which he did with a heavy heart, for he had daughters of his own), it seemed to the little girl that they had been having a pleasantly informal chat.

Claude, who had been sent out for a walk, returned just after the physician had gone. It gave him a shock, seeing the coast clear and realising that the important word had been spoken. That it was a bad word he knew directly he entered the house. Despair seemed to hang in the passage like a fog. At first he feared he would be greeted with

"'Tell Mr. Roberts we won't be wanting it any more,' he said to the servant."

embarrassing sympathy; but the family were all miserable, and seemingly unaware that the blow was worse for him than for them. Max and Walter at least should have recognised that with Margaret he came first. And then he caught sight of the tortoise. What a lot had resulted from its coming into the house! Well, it was all over now, and it would be better to be without this reminder of what could not be. When it was gone, perhaps he would not be asked to endorse so many falsehoods.

The return of the tortoise, compared with its abduction, was a very tame and conventional affair. Claude packed it in a little hamper, and left it at No. 113 with his compliments.

"Tell Mr. Roberts we won't be wanting it any more," he said to the servant.

Margaret was asking for Claude when he returned, and he went to her at once; but perhaps it would have been better if he had not.

"I dunno that I care so much for being shipwrecked," he said.

His sister opened her eyes in surprise. How could anyone be indifferent to such a glorious experience?

"When I am a man, I would sooner go up to an office like father."

"How silly!"

"I shall wear a top-hat. I will have seven top-hats—one for every day of the week—and we will live together in a house like Mrs. Smith's, with toy banjoes on the drawing-room walls and hundreds of Japanese fans."

"I am not going to play a game like that. I am going to talk about the island."

She began, but lacking the solid foundation of the tortoise to build upon, her fancies collapsed.

"Fetch the tortoise, Claude, and we can play properly."

"I have given it back to Mr. Roberts."

Margaret coloured to the roots of her hair.

"You think that I won't ever get well. You are a horrid, mean little boy, and I won't ever speak to you again!"

"Very well," said Claude; "I will go out and play by myself in the garden. I'd rather."

He got as far as the flight of iron steps and stopped there thinking.

The servant at No. 113 had restored the tortoise to the garden, and it was now clambering over a piece of dilapidated rockery with a blazing sun upon it, for the afternoon was one of the hottest of the year. Claude saw the island again, with its coral reef and the waving cocoanut palms. Well, he could

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go adventuring now that his sister had cast him off; but he knew by this time that he would sooner live with her at home, although that meant the unattractive office. And she refused now to have anything to do with him. It was very rough on a fellow who had really tried to do the square thing.

And then Mrs. Tyrell appeared and filled the cup of injustice to the brim.

"What have you been saying to Margaret to make her cry? And I am surprised that this afternoon you could not have kept with her."

"She says she won't ever speak to me again."

"Oh, nonsense! Now run straight in and make it up."

Claude went reluctantly, for he did not for a moment doubt that Margaret's last word to him had been spoken.

Her greeting at first puzzled him. Hearing him enter the room, she turned round and welcomed him with a watery smile.

"You are home early to-night. How many pounds have you earned to-day?"

Claude tumbled to it that they were living together, and that he was a very rich man. This was quite likely, for Margaret had established him in business as a tea broker.

"Papa's friend, Mr. Richards, who was here some time ago, is a tea broker, and he is very well off. You know more about tea than he does, so they would pay you more money."

"I know all there is about tea, but I never heard how to break it," said Claude; "but I expect I could learn."

"I bet you could."

So they played that Claude was a rich tea broker, and Margaret kept house for him; and although it was a poor game compared with the one they had played, there was fun to be squeezed from it if they tried hard.

"When we are both grown up," said Margaret, "we really will always live together."

"We will," said Claude.

"And you won't get married or bring in anyone else; and I won't get married or bring in anyone else, either."

"Honour bright," said Claude, holding out his hand.

"I suppose you wouldn't say 'Honest Indian' about that?" said Margaret wistfully.

"Honest Indian!" said Claude stoutly.

The little girl gave a sigh of content.

"What I like about 'Honest Indian,'" she said, "is that when that is said, you know everything is quite settled."

THE RAIN.

THIS is the rhyme of the rain on the roof;
Tears, all tears, slow falling tears—
If this is the warp, then what is the woof?
Flesh that sorrows and flesh that fears.

Ah! poor humanity weeping sore,
Guilt and sorrow, anger and shame,
Oh! who could peace on this earth restore?
Who shall punish and who shall blame?

Here where a God loved much was slain,
Since He hath failed, then who can win?
On the thirsting ground let them fall again,
Tears of sorrow and tears of sin.

DORA SIGERSON.

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THE ROMANCE OF SALVAGE ENGINEERING.

By John M. Carlisle.

IT is a moot point whether there is any ramification of marine engineering so fascinating and yet so precarious as wreck-raising. The salvor is an indispensable acquisition to the shipping world. In these days of gigantic ocean greyhounds, when one single vessel may possibly represent half a million sterling, and carry a valuable and extensive cargo easily worth another similar sum, it will be recognised what heavy loss would continually be incurred if the wreck scavenger were an unknown being. Many a vessel runs ashore, or founders in shallow water, and would be totally lost were it not for the salvor and his innumerable ingenious appliances. So expert has he become in his particular profession that nowadays, unless a ship founders in an impenetrable depth of water, or is utterly smashed to pieces upon the rocks or by the waves, it is very seldom that she is totally lost.

Notwithstanding the fact that this country controls the greatest part of the world's maritime traffic, it is a curious and noteworthy circumstance that there is not a British salvage company in possession of such elaborate and up-to-date equipments as those owned by several Continental companies, such as the Neptun or the Svitzer organisations. It is by no means pleasant reading to learn that we depend upon foreigners for assistance where we ought to lead the world. Yet the industry is a peculiarly lucrative one, as the prominent foreign companies have discovered; hence their present proportions, with their wrecking steamers distributed throughout the world.

The largest and most important salvage company is the London Salvage Association. Existing under the *ægis* of Lloyds, its agents are ubiquitous. But for practical purposes it has only an organising existence. It possesses no plant, and conducts most of its operations by contract with the other salvage companies, mainly upon the principle of "No cure, no pay," a basis which, no matter how satisfactory it may be to the first party to the contract, is extremely hazardous to the actual salvors, because if the work be not accomplished, they receive absolutely no remuneration, despite the fact that they may have expended a vast sum of money upon their uncompleted scheme. The most glaring instance of the uncertainty of this work was the case of the steamship *Paris*, which ran ashore upon the Manacles. To the uninitiated it appeared but a simple operation to remove

THE "UTOPIA" WRECKED IN BAY OF GIBRALTAR, SHOWING WATER-LEVEL OF COFFERDAM.

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a few tons of rock to free the vessel, yet one or two salvage companies essayed the task and failed.

The annals of salvage engineering contain many remarkable achievements. Take the case of the steamship *Utopia*. During a heavy gale in the Bay of Gibraltar this vessel, an Italian emigrant ship, drifted upon the bow of H.M.S. *Anson*, with the result that the ram of the battleship knocked a gaping hole in her side. She rapidly filled and foundered, dragging a large number of passengers with her to a watery grave. When day broke, the vessel was found to be within a short distance of land, and her masts and funnel were visible above high water. Her position offered a serious menace to the navigation in the bay, and the authorities ordered either her immediate salvage or destruction. A survey was made, and the results of the divers' investigations prompted an attempt to raise her. She was lying in 57 ft. of water at the stern, and at a slight list. The East Coast Salvage Company, of Leith, one of the foremost salvage organisations in this country, undertook the contract, under the supervision of Mr. Armit, engineer to the company. It was a perilous business. Not only was the rent in her side extensive, but there were numerous swift currents which militated against the satisfactory performance of the task. Undeterred by these difficulties, a huge cofferdam was erected upon the steamer. This, by the way, is the principle invariably adopted by Mr. Armit for raising a vessel, and he has found it to be eminently successful. The *modus operandi* is practically to extend the vessel's hull upwards from the deck to the water level. It necessitates strong construction to withstand the action of tides and currents. A comprehensive idea of the heavy character of the work may be gathered from a glance at our illustration, showing the vessel when raised. In this instance the difficulties encountered by the engineer were abnormal, and the cofferdam erected was stated by several authorities to be a triumph of engineering skill. When this part of the work had been performed, divers proceeded to patch the rent caused by the battleship's ram, upon the completion of which the vessel was ready for raising. This was accomplished by simply pumping out the water from the area enclosed within the cofferdam. Six 12-in. Invincible Centrifugal Pumping Engines, which in themselves

"UTOPIA" RAISED AND BEING TOWED ASHORE.

DECK OF "UTOPIA" AFTER RAISING, SHOWING HEAVY NATURE OF COFFERDAM.

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THE SS. "HYPATIA" WAS RAISED—

attempted her recovery. Four times she was brought to the surface, and as many times, through the failure of some portion of the raising apparatus, she sank again. On the fifth occasion, however, the salvors made sure of their quarry, and the refractory steamer was recovered.

are remarkable and ingenious appliances of tremendous capacity, were set to work, and a combined stream of water equal to 70 tons was delivered per minute. Within one hour after the pumps were set to work, and after some 4,000 tons of water had been removed, the vessel was lifted off the ground and rose steadily to the surface. As she rose she was towed towards shore, ultimately beached, temporarily overhauled, and then towed to Glasgow. The whole of the work was performed within the short space of two or three months, a highly creditable achievement.

But it is not always that the work proceeds so smoothly and no hitches or misadventures are encountered. The SS. *Hypatia* proved a veritable thorn in the sides of the salvage engineers who

The process of recovering wrecks depends upon the local conditions and the position of the craft. When the *Puffin* lightship, off Queenstown, foundered during a gale, she

FOUR TIMES UNSUCCESSFULLY, BUT ON —

was brought to the surface again by a curious method. At low tide two barges took up their positions on either side of the submerged vessel. Thick, strong cables were then passed from one barge under the sunken wreck, and up on to the deck of the other barge. The cables were then drawn taut. When the tide rose again, the wreck was necessarily lifted off the ground, and towed in shore until she once more rested upon the shelving bottom. At the next low tide the cables were once more drawn taut, and at high water

THE FIFTH ATTEMPT WAS RECOVERED.

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A GOVERNMENT DREDGER, SUNK IN THE RIVER ELBE, WAS BEING RAISED BY PONTOONS, BUT—

the vessel was once more lifted, the process being repeated until the lightship was beached, a battered and broken hulk. This was also the method employed in the raising of the *Eurydice*, which foundered off the Isle of Wight several years ago.

In shallow waters, when the proportions of the submerged wreck are adaptable, and the local conditions are propitious, the wreck is sometimes raised by means of pontoons. These are huge rectangular caissons, which are filled with water and sunk near the wreck, to which they are attached by means of cables. The water in the pontoons is then displaced with air, and the lifting that is thus exerted is tremendous. As the pontoons gradually rise to the surface, the wreck to which they are secured is also lifted. This work, however, is fraught with many difficulties, since should a cable break, or the pontoons not rise evenly, all the preparatory work may be suddenly undone. Notably was this the case in the raising of a dredger which sank in the River Elbe. Pontoons were sunk into position, and huge trestles were erected to act as levers to right the vessel when lifted. Suddenly, however, without the slightest warning, and while the strain was at the maximum, they collapsed, and the wreck sank back into its river bed, destroying the work of several weeks.

During heavy gales it is no uncommon circumstance for a vessel to be caught up by a wave and stranded upon the coast. When the sea calms down, the ship is left high and dry, far away from her native element. Invariably the vessel only sustains a trifling damage, and the salvor consequently sets to work to devise a means of restoring the ship to the sea. Sometimes a wooden slipway will be erected, and the vessel hauled along this improvised roadway, which is thoroughly greased with some unguent to facilitate the operation. A much more general method, however, is to construct a temporary

THE TRESTLES COLLAPSED UNDER THE STRAIN.

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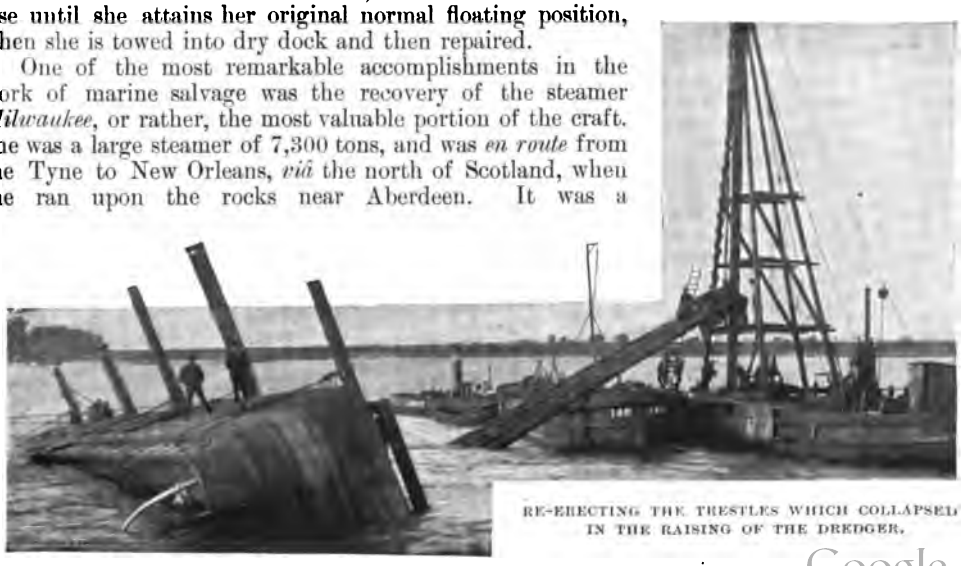
SS. "CORVYN MATYASS" IMPRISONED IN THE ICE IN THE BALTIC SEA.

canal from the point where the ship is stranded to the open sea, wide enough to allow the vessel to pass through it, and then at high tide to tow the vessel seawards. In the case of a sandy coast this operation is both laborious and difficult, since the salvage engineer has to devise a means of preventing the work he has accomplished at low water from being destroyed when the sea rises at high tide. The banks of the improvised waterway are lined with sacks filled with sand, and this prevents the channel from being filled with silt by the action of the tide.

A unique salvage feat was the recovery of the SS. *Corvyn Matyass*. This vessel was caught in the ice off Otchakoff, in the Baltic Sea, and the jamming ice-floes threatened to crush her. The ice-breaking steamer *Ermack* was unknown in those days, otherwise her rescue would have been an easy matter to the salvors; but the engineers had to resort to their own ingenuity and resources to accomplish the object. They cut a channel through the solid ice sufficiently wide to admit of the passage of the vessel. Quite an unusual scene of activity and bustle was imparted to the scene by the operations. No less than fifty teams of horses and sledges and 200 labourers were requisitioned to remove the ice, while another ship was utilised to dredge the channel to keep it open until the vessel was able to proceed on her way.

Occasionally, when a vessel founders in shallow water, and the damage caused is not very extensive, divers descend, patch up the hole, and then tightly and securely batten down all the hatches, rendering them perfectly watertight. Pumps are then requisitioned to remove the water from the interior of the vessel. As the water is thus withdrawn, and no water can re-enter the holds, the wreck is bound to rise until she attains her original normal floating position, when she is towed into dry dock and then repaired.

One of the most remarkable accomplishments in the work of marine salvage was the recovery of the steamer *Milwaukee*, or rather, the most valuable portion of the craft. She was a large steamer of 7,300 tons, and was *en route* from the Tyne to New Orleans, *viâ* the north of Scotland, when she ran upon the rocks near Aberdeen. It was a



RE-ERECTING THE TRESTLES WHICH COLLAPSED IN THE RAISING OF THE DREDGER.

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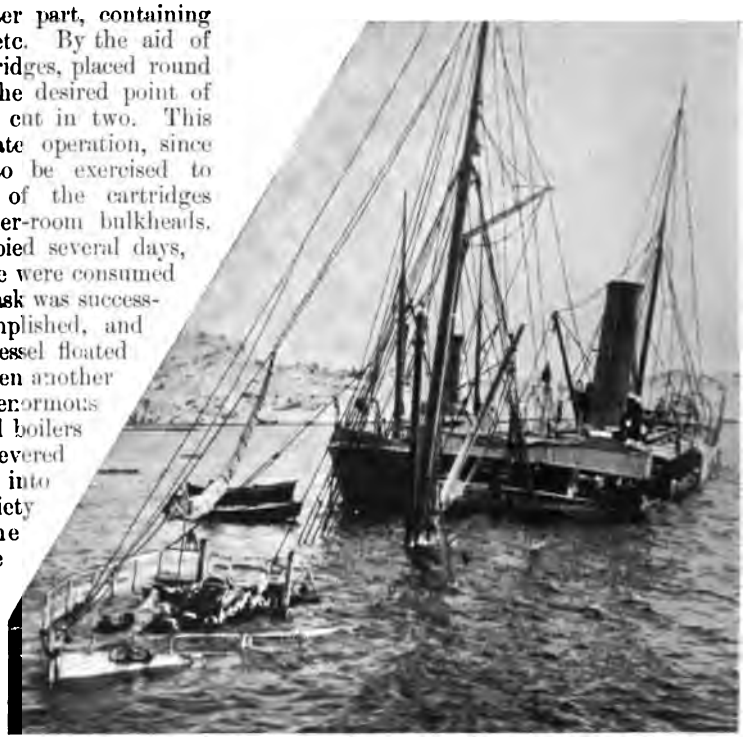
lamentable disaster, because the vessel was practically new. The underwriters determined on the difficult work of salvage, and entrusted the Liverpool Salvage Association with the task. The vessel was firmly jammed upon the rocks, and her fore part was extensively damaged owing to the action of the waves incessantly bumping her on the rocks. Recognising that the salvage of the vessel in its entirety was absolutely impossible, Captain Bachelor, an experienced engineer, who was superintending the work, decided to save her most valuable section—that is, the after part, containing the machinery, boilers, etc. By the aid of a belt of dynamite cartridges, placed round the hull of the ship at the desired point of severance, the vessel was cut in two. This was an extremely delicate operation, since unremitting care had to be exercised to prevent the explosions of the cartridges from damaging the boiler-room bulkheads. The actual cutting occupied several days, and 500 lbs. of dynamite were consumed in the operation. The task was successfully and cleanly accomplished, and the after part of the vessel floated away off the rocks. Then another danger arose. The enormous weight of the engines and boilers caused that end of the severed portion to sink deeply into the water, and great anxiety was evinced by the engineer as to the stability of the engine-room bulkheads being sufficient to withstand the tremendous pressure. The *Milwaukee* was constructed so strongly, however, that not the slightest sign of the bulkheads collapsing under the unusual pressure was observed, and in this curious plight the saved portion of the *Milwaukee* was towed back to the Tyne, a distance of 150 miles, and the steamer actually assisted the tugs as far as possible with her own engines. When she arrived at the shipyard of Messrs. Swan and Hunter, who had originally built her, a new fore part was constructed and spliced to the saved section. This was no easy task, but so skilfully and carefully was the work fulfilled, that the second *Milwaukee* only differed from her prototype by six tons in her gross tonnage.

The work of the salvage engineer has been considerably facilitated by the invention of ingenious appliances, without which it would be almost impossible for him to accomplish the work entrusted to him. The centrifugal pump, an apparently insignificant contrivance, has done much to revolutionise salvage engineering. Then, again, how would the salvor fare without the valuable assistance of the diver? Probably the diver is his most essential acquisition, since the major part of the work has to be performed under water. The majority of the divers for this branch are supplied by Messrs. Siebe, Gorman and Co., the well-known manufacturers of submarine equipment, and are always thoroughly experienced and reliable men. It is through the courtesy of this firm that we are enabled to publish many of the illustrations accompanying this article.



SS. "VOLA" WRECKED IN THE SCAW.

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UNSOLVED.

By IAN MACLAREN.*

No. IV.—THE SPIRIT OF THE PLACE.

"IT was my good fortune," said the barrister, when his turn came to tell a story, "to spend my summer holidays in the days of youth at a Perthshire farmhouse which stood among hills where the plain of Strathmore begins to rise into the Grampians. There was a little river to fish, and half-a-dozen burns where a boy could catch trout with his hand, and moors across which he could ride on his pony, and an endless change of scene, from helping with the harvest to going out to the shooters on the Twelfth, from gathering together a herd of Highland cattle on the hill—who had to be very delicately handled—to visiting a tinker's encampment among the broom, where the man repaired pots and pans, and the woman told fortunes. But the glory and inexhaustible attraction of the place was an old castle which by that time had fallen into ruins, and for which no one cared, and therefore it was at all times at the disposal of a lad in whom the spirit of romance, fed by Scott and Fenimore Cooper, was beginning to stir. Some fighting laird on the border line between the Highlands and the Lowlands, who never knew when the Caterans would come over the moor from the glens above and raid the cattle he had fed for the Southern markets, had chosen the site with care. Upon two sides there was a deep little glen, with a burn running at the foot and some fine old trees on the slopes, and here the cattle of the district could be sheltered in time of danger. On the top of the steep side of the glen the castle stood, and the land sloped away from it down to a river, and beyond the river it rose again into a little plain which in the olden times was covered with wood. When I could not fish any more, and nothing was doing on the moor, then I spent my afternoons in the castle or wandering about the den, and, as boys will do about the age of sixteen, I reconstructed the history of the past; and that, I suppose, explains what happened, or rather, it explains how I lay open to the impression which I suggest was in the atmosphere of the place.

"It was not difficult to rebuild the castle, which had been a fortified house of four floors, with no windows on the lower floor, only portholes, with projecting turrets at two of the four corners, and most likely a range of low houses for horses and servants, with an arched gateway completing the square. If one climbed carefully to the second floor, he could trace a dining-hall, with its huge fireplace and row of windows; and, looking up, he could see the remains of a little bedroom which opened into a turret; and once, when no one was by to damp my daring, I managed to reach this bedroom, and looking through the turret window, could see across the plain on the other side of the river, and imagined how one might signal to a house in the distance.

"That afternoon I not only rebuilt the castle, but I also tenanted it with a laird who had been out in the Fifteenth, and was going out in the Forty-Five—having for the time come to terms with the Caterans on the basis of a common love for the Stuarts and a common hatred of all governments. I gave him a handsome wife, who was the daughter of a Highland chief; and being in a generous mood, I enriched him with a beautiful daughter, whose love story I intended to work out after I had settled the history of the family and thoroughly furnished the house. About sons I was not certain, but was inclined to allow them one, who would distinguish himself greatly at the Battle of Preston Pans; but his career was also reserved. There were traces of fish-ponds on the southern slope, and the remains of a garden; and after filling the ponds and laying out the garden on a generous scale, I gave my attention to a special corner under the castle wall where there still lingered the relics of a pleasaunce. There could be no doubt this was the lady's own particular garden, for there were wild rose bushes and plants of thyme, and a yew tree, which had no doubt once been carefully trimmed, and also a fine old birch, beneath whose shade I

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placed a seat. Sitting there in imagination, one could look down into the den, and hear the water running over the stones, and see cattle among the trees, just as they had been herded there for fear of raiders; the flowers were blooming, and outside this sanctuary the pigeons were cooing at their dovecote. Through an opening in the yew hedge one could see the afternoon sun shining on the fish-ponds. From the open window of the hall above I heard the clash of swords, and knew that the laird and his son were fencing, and from the high turret of my young lady's room streamed out a Jacobite song. I was so pleased with my creation that I determined to complete the work while at it; and as it is tiresome to invent when you are standing, I went round the corner of the old birch tree and lay down on the grass. I shut my eyes, that I might better see what was within; and so it came to pass with me what happens to other people when they close their eyes in order to hear the sermon better and be relieved from the distractions of the outer world, I fell asleep.

"When I awoke—although, of course, this is an ambiguity of language—the sun had long been westering, and it was dusk round the old castle. How it came to pass, I did not think then and need not speculate now, but the scene had, as it were, grown and filled up, so that I was saved any more need for romancing. The trees in the den were smaller than when I fell asleep, but there were more of them, and the cattle were not as large nor as well bred as my good farmer's cows, but of them also there were more. As I looked round the corner of the birch, I saw the sweetest of little gardens, completely shut in by a high hedge, well stocked with flowers, chiefly white roses. In the garden there was a little summer-house, hidden under the castle wall and covered with ivy, so cunningly concealed that two people, at least, might meet there, and no one in the castle be any the wiser. There was a stir of life about the place, although everything was rougher and more common than I had imagined my ancient keep to be, except the garden, which, with its flowers and well-kept border, proved that one of the family had feeling and good taste. The voices that came from the courtyard were loud and rough, and through the hedge, although I did see the fish-pond, I also, by another opening, caught a glimpse of a huge manure-heap, which could not be far from the front door of the castle. The windows of the room above my head were certainly glazed, but several of the panes were broken and some were repaired with wood. There were no dainty hangings, and someone had hung his coat outside to dry in the sunshine, which was now rapidly dying away. Only men's voices came from the room, with a strong, coarse accent; and I was certain that my idea of cavaliers, daintily dressed, sitting in an oak-panelled room drinking a health to the King over the water, would be rudely dispelled if I climbed up the ivy and looked in upon the Laird of Kinnochtry. As a matter of fact, I not only did not climb, but I was not able to move from my hiding-place beneath the birch tree. I was held there as by a spell, seeing everything and entering into everything, but unable to say a word or lift a hand. From the beginning I knew that something was going to happen, and that it would be terrible to behold, but that I should have no part nor lot in the matter. I was now present with one consciousness at some date in the eighteenth century, and looking upon life in my old castle as it used to be; but with my other consciousness I was in the nineteenth century—a lad who fished in the burn beneath and had made his own romances about the castle. And, in passing—though, of course, in those days I did not work the idea out—is it not possible to be with one consciousness in one century and one place, and with the other consciousness in another century and in another place? And may it not be possible—and I will not trouble you further with any other speculation—for the atmosphere round one to be so charged with tragic events that they may become visible to a person in a susceptible state, as secret writing contained on paper can be flung out when exposed to heat? Even as I stood, I felt like two people, and the one of the nineteenth century was disappointed and disgusted with the sight of the courtyard, and a slatternly woman crossing the manure-heap, and that most unromantic garment hanging on the wall, and the remains of food cast out from the window upon the grass near my tree. But if romance be love and war, I should have enough before all was done.

"The voices ceased in the dining-room, and a minute later I heard them in the courtyard ordering the horses to be brought, and announcing a journey to Blair, where the Lairds of Balhousie and Craighall, together with other drinking worthies of the district, were to hold a carouse for the night. An old man, short in stature, but strongly built, clad in hodden grey, with riding boots.

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and armed with a sword at his waist, I took to be Kinnochtry himself; and the young man, taller and slighter, but also powerful, who was armed with a lighter sword and was rather more fashionably dressed, I concluded was the young laird. They told someone whom I could not see, but took to be a serving-man, that he need not expect them home that night; and riding away, they left a charge that the keep be securely locked before night fell, and a good watch be kept, lest any Highland limmer should creep into the den and steal the cattle. I listened till the sound of their horses' feet died away in the distance, and I marked that young Kinnochtry was singing 'The Bonnie Earl of Murray.'

"Ye Hielands and ye Lawlands,
Oh! whar hae ye been?
They have slain the Earl of Murray,
And hae laid him on the green.

Now wae be to ye, Huntly,
And wherefore did ye sae?
I bad you bring him wi' you,
But forbad you him to slay.

"'Dinna let mair blood be shed.'"

And the last I heard coming back to the keep on the quiet evening air was :—

"Oh! lang will his lady
Luke ouer the castle Downe,
Ere she sees the Earl of Murray
Come sounding throw the towne.

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"There seemed to me such a ring of satisfaction and of triumph in the singing that I was haunted with fear of some tragedy, and wondered whether the Highland Caterans were watching on the moor above, and would seize the chance to spoil the castle while the Laird and his son were drinking in Blair to the health of the King across the water.

"Another voice began to sing, and this time it was a woman's, but the song was one I did not know and was full of sadness. I looked up to discover whence it came, and I saw a young woman lean out from a turret window and look down on the courtyard and the garden and the den, either to see whether someone was there whom she wished to meet, or to be sure that no one was looking. She withdrew her head, and next time she appeared she held in her hand something like a small white sheet. Once more she reconnoitred, and now I understood that she did not wish to be observed; and when everything seemed safe, for I did not count beneath the birch—indeed, I did not count at all in the incident—she lifted the sheet in her two hands and waved it as one waves a flag. Once, and then at intervals, twice and thrice; and then she withdrew, and for a little I heard the wail, for it was rather that than a song. A few minutes afterwards her voice died into silence, and all was quiet except for the lowing of the cattle in the dens and the cooing of the pigeons as they went to rest. And the sun was now westering fast. The water sang a pleasant song beneath, and all Nature spoke of peace, yet I knew something was going to happen. For whom had the young woman signalled? What did it mean, if she had waited till her father and brother were gone? Would he come, whoever he was? and was he her lover? and if he came, would he be discovered by the serving-folk? And was it certain that Kinnochtry and his son had really gone to Blair? I did not like their loud announcements, and I thought that an ill-omened song which young Kinnochtry had chosen.

"As I was speculating and putting things together, the young woman came round the corner of the castle into her garden; and after glancing up at the windows, she entered into the summer-house and sat down with a sigh which I could hear where I stood. She was simply dressed in some dark-coloured cloth, and had a white silk kerchief on her neck and bosom, and her only ornament was the Jacobite badge of the white briar rose which she wore at her breast and also in her hair, for she was bareheaded. She was like her brother, tall and slight, but handsomer than either father or brother, and more refined, with fair hair touched by gold and coming down low on the forehead. Her eyes were grey and faithful, her lips full and rich, and her whole expression bore witness to an affectionate, trustful, kindly disposition; but she seemed pained and fearful, as of one whose joy in life had been dashed, and over whom hung the shadow of some calamity. And I, boy though I was, was so taken with her gentleness and her contrast to everyone else about the place that I should have liked to have asked what ailed her, and to have told her that in me she had at least one faithful knight. Within the summer-house she began to sing; and though I did not then know the ballad, I have identified it since, and among all the songs of Scotland there is none so sad.

"O Waly! Waly! up yon bank,
And Waly! Waly! down yon brae;
And Waly! by yon river's side
Where my love and I was wont to gae.

Waly! Waly! gin love be bonny
A little while when it is new;
But when it's auld, it waxes cauld,
And wears away like morning dew.

I leant my back unto an aik,
I thought it was a trusty tree;
But first it bowed and sine it brake,
And sae did my fause love to me.

O Martinmas wind, when wilt thou blaw,
And shake the green leaves off the tree?
O gentle death, when wilt thou come,
And take a life that wearies me?

"Still singing, or rather crooning, she came out of the summer-house and went to the edge of the den, and looked down to see if anyone were coming; and then she suddenly started and looked back with an expression of keen alarm upon her face. Someone was coming from the courtyard. She hesitated for a moment, once more searched the den to see if he were there, and then turned round and walked across the little garden to the opening in the yew tree hedge, and stood face to face with the Laird, her father. As I suspected, the crafty pair had not ridden far, and now the father had come stealthily back to catch his daughter as she met her lover. And the son? He could not be far off. Had he gone to take the lover in hand?

"'Weel, lassie,' and Kinnochtry's voice was charged with cold scorn, 'ye seem surprised to see me back, and no mightily pleased. I expected a warmer welcome when your brother and me gave up a nicht at Blair

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wi' some of the richt side to keep ye company. Were ye no feered to be left alone wi' nothin' but a deaf auld wife in the castle and a man that ye've sent away on an errand to the muir? Ye have a brave heart, lassie, to keep hoose by yersel' when there's so many queer folk aboot.' And he fixed his daughter with a merciless eye, while she grew red and then white before him and, visibly trembling, reached out her hand to the hedge for support.

"'I met him fishing, and he spoke to me.'"

"'No doubt ye're wondering, Marjorie, what changed our minds and made your brother and me so anxious about your safety. It was a bit of news we got, and I'll no deny it has touched us close. A wee bird came and whispered in our ears that a neighbour from across the river wha has hated us as his forebears did afore him—and I'm no saying that we love him aither; no, I'll no say that your brother and me love the Laird of Auchterhouse—was coming to pay a call this evening to Kinnochtry. It's no the first time that the folk of Auchterhouse have visited Kinnochtry, for if ye'll tak the trouble to come round the corner of the keep, I'll show you the verra spot where old Auchterhouse fell shot dead by my father thirty-five year ago. That was the last call he made here. And this man's elder brother stabbed your uncle in Blair market in open daylicht. It was three months after that he was buried himsel', and I didna attend the funeral; but had it no been for me, and this guid sword by my side, there would hae been no funeral to attend.' Marjorie clung to the hedge, but said never a word, fascinated by her father's grim face and cold-blooded irony.

"'We're Christians, lassie, baptised in the kirk, and regular attenders when there's no other job on hand; but releegion has limitations, and your brother and me have no been hankering to see the Laird o' Auchterhouse at Kinnochtry. At ony rate, if he was to call, we judged it better for our hoose, besides being more polite, lassie—and your brother and me are no without our manners—that we should be present to receive him and to gie him the welcome he deserves.' And Kinnochtry's last words cut the air like a sword.

"'We've been telt—but ye'll correct me, Marjorie, if I'm wrang, for ye're a truthful daughter in word and deed—that this is no the first time Auchterhouse has paid his respects, and I'm judgin' he was astonished there was no man to receive him. It's been an oversicht, but we'll mak up for that the nicht.

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It was a pity that he didna come in the daytime instead of the gloaming, and didna come round by the front gate as his father did. I dinna say he would have likit the company better, but there would have been more to meet him, and I'm thinkin' he would have stayed longer. But we'll do oor best, Marjorie, me and your brother, to make up for the past.'

"His daughter, who had been withering under her father's terrible face, recovered herself at the last suggestion and looked fearfully down the garden. When she saw her brother standing at the foot, where there was a piece of sward, and peering down the den through some bushes which hid him from the sight of anyone approaching, she threw herself down at her father's feet and caught him by the knees.

"'Have mercy, father!' she cried; 'have mercy, and I'll confess all! But dinna let mair blood be shed; for surely, surely there's been enough black trouble between Kinnochtry and Auchterhouse. It's no his blame; it's mine. I was lonely in this auld place with neither mother nor sister, and you and James aye awa'. I wearied, and I met him fishing on the river, and he spoke to me; and, father, they were the first kind words I ever had from a man of oor ain rank. He was gentle and pleasant wi' me, and I know that I shouldna have let him come in secret to Kinnochtry; but I loved him, and I kent ye would never look upon his face in peace. We have sinned, and I confess it; but for my mother's sake spare him and me!' But when she looked up at her father's face, she saw no sign of relenting.

"'Auchterhouse is coming here the nicht. I dinna deny it, though wha telt ye I'll no ask. Call back James, father, and let me meet Auchterhouse, and he'll never come here again in secret, I'll give ye my word. Have pity on James, if ye have none on the other, for one o' them'll fall; and have pity on me, for I'll be the cause o' the death. Will ye let me go, father?' and she sprang to her feet and laid her hands on Kinnochtry's arm.

"'Na, na, lassie; ye have gone aince too often, if a' tales be true, to meet Auchterhouse, and ye'll never go again. I wouldna say but there micht be some words atween Auchterhouse and yir brother; but it's no for me to interfere; and by my soul, Marjorie,' said Kinnochtry fiercely, 'it's no you that'll come atween them!'

"As he spoke, Kinnochtry took his daughter in his arms and carried her across to the summer-house and placed her there; and then, standing at the door with her shut in behind him, he asked his son if their visitor was coming, and James signalled with his hand to be quiet.

"There was no sound in the garden, save a low sobbing from the summer-house, and then a minute later the bushes parted from the edge of the den, and Auchterhouse came through and stood face to face with young Kinnochtry. The light was fading fast, but there was enough wherein to see the men, and enough for Kinnochtry's purpose. One could understand at a glance the fascination which young Auchterhouse had in the eyes of Marjorie, for he had been abroad, and was more a gallant than the men of her family. So far as the face of him and his dress went, he was a lover of whom no girl need be ashamed, yet from my birch tree I liked not the expression of his eye nor the sneer upon his lips. I judged, with the instinct of a lad, that there was no pity in him either for man or woman; and while my heart bled for Marjorie, I could not wish success to Auchterhouse.

"It was young Kinnochtry that spoke first, and it was plain he had not the control of his father. 'Ye didna expect to meet me, or ony other man here, my lad, when ye cam wi' yir false face like a fox in the gloaming to steal yir game. Ye thought to meet a foolish lassie whose heart ye wiled by yir lyin' tongue; and it's a kiss ye were expectin', but, by the God that made us, it's the end o' a sword ye get.'

"Auchterhouse glanced once at Kinnochtry, and in that instant he caught the sound of the crying, and then he looked the brother up and down with mockery on his face.

"'My certes,' he said, with an accent half Scots and half Southern, 'I was not looking for the pleasure of meeting the whole family of Kinnochtry in one little garden, for I heard that the Laird and you were trysted at Blair this very night. Our houses have had some coming and going in past days not altogether friendly, I believe, and I might not have had the courage to come across the river to pay my respects at Kinnochtry had I not been invited.'

"'You black liar!' cried young Kinnochtry, drawing his sword; and when I saw what an unredeemed scoundrel Auchterhouse was, though all the time I pitied Marjorie, I hoped that he would be killed.

"'Hardly that, my blunt, straightforward neighbour,' and Auchterhouse had now his hand upon his sword. 'When a fair lady in-

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"Her father passed his sword time after time through the body of this worst enemy of his house."

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vites a gentleman to visit her, and the letter is writ so large it can be seen a mile off, I ask yourself whether he is not bound to come, and all the more when she has been——

"Before he could say another word his sword was out and they were busy at work, while the Laird stood in the summer-house door and the girl lay behind. Young Kinnochtry was the stronger man and a good swordsman, but he was furious in his rage, and had, therefore, the less command of his weapon. The other was as cold as ice and as venomous as a serpent, and was evidently a cunning fencer. For a while he stood on his defence, parrying the fierce attack, and then he began on his part to respond. Kinnochtry stepped forward from the doorway and was plainly anxious, although he gave no sign of interference. There was a clash of swords, with rapid motions which I could not follow, and young Kinnochtry's sword flew out of his hand, and he stood at the mercy of Auchterhouse, who seemed to hesitate for a second before he passed his sword through him. During that second Marjorie, who, unheeded by all, had escaped from the summer-house, flung herself between the combatants, and ere anyone could hinder it, her lover's sword found its home in her breast. She fell, in face of her father, between her lover and brother, without a word except a cry for mercy. The sound had not died away, and Auchterhouse's sword had not been withdrawn from the heart he had twice pierced, before Kinnochtry had run him through, and he fell dead beside Marjorie. Her brother stood motionless and paralysed, but her father passed his sword time after time, three times in all, through the body of this worst enemy of his house.

"'God's curse on you in this world and in that which is to come! Take his carcass, James, and throw it into the den, and send word to Auchterhouse that they can come and fetch their Laird." He lifted up his daughter, and I saw him carry her through the opening in the hedge; and he did not weep, but I heard him say: 'It was better this way for herself and for our name.' As she passed through, her hair, which had loosened, caught in the hedge. He gently disentangled it, and I caught him repeating her name twice: 'Marjorie, Marjorie.' I tried to follow him, and in the trying I awoke. It was almost dark, and the garden was again deserted and in ruins; but nothing will ever convince me after all the years that it had not seen that tragedy."

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"SWEET CONTENT." FROM THE PICTURE BY W. BOTHAMS.

SALEM JONES, SHEPHERD.

By J. J. Britton.

THE shepherds who watched their flocks by night on the hills of Palestine had perhaps a drier and pleasanter time than my acquaintance, Salem Jones, whom I overtook one nasty February morning about six o'clock. There was a keen easterly wind that drove a powdering of fine snow and sleet before it, which seemed to penetrate to the marrow. He was coming from his shepherding, and with his grotesque and dripping felt hat, and the wet sackcloth, with "M N O Mill" stencilled on it, that covered his shoulders, looked like a moving sponge. It is not often that I take my walks abroad so early in February or in such uninviting weather; but I had had a business call to the bedside of a sick client, and in the shelter of my thick ulster, with its collar well up to the brim of my hat, and my biggest pipe sending its grateful fumes round my nose, I could just endure the February morning. Salem looked about as fagged as a man returning from trench duty, and shuffled his spider legs, bound round with hay-bands, in a dead-beat and spiritless fashion.

"Hallo, Salem!" I cried. "Nasty morning, this." He shook his head to rid himself of the superfluous moisture, and then made an effort to find the brim of his shapeless hat with his forefinger, as he gave me "Good day, sur. A wet un, this."

"Out all night shepherding?"

"Yuss, sir. This be the fifth night of um, and I be welly beat."

"I should think so."

We were just passing my house, and, having pity on the fagged and draggled shepherd, I persuaded him to step into my study and get a little dried before reaching his cottage.

There was a rare fire of coal and logs waiting for me, and some hot coffee stood by its side.

Salem's eyes—watery, grey ones—set on each side of a nose that was the colour of beet and of no particular design, twinkled with pleasure. The wet sack was taken off

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SALEM JONES, COTSWOLD SHEPHERD.
From a drawing by A. J. Wall.

and carefully placed on the hall mat, and he then seated himself, by my invitation, by the genial blaze, and forthwith began to surround himself with a mist of steam. A cup of hot coffee and a hunch of bread-and-butter made a new man of him. I presented him with one of my disused briar-root pipes, and filled it with my strongest cavendish. Then I could see that the weary shepherd was happy.

"Been long at the shepherding, Salem?" I asked.

"Long as iver I cood walk, sur." (His age was about fifty, as I guessed.) "Feyther wur a shepherd afore me; bin among the ship all my life, sur."

"The pay good?"

"Well, fairish. Us shepherds gets two bob a week more nor the other labourers; and then I gets my grub at the master's through the yeaning month."

"And the pay in money is——?"

"'Bout fourteen bob a week. Us shepherds sleeps at the master's, and we 'as our cider and a drop of beer."

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TWO PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIES OF SHEEP.

By Charles Reid, Wishaw.

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"You stop there to be handy?"

"Yuss, sur."

"You are not married?"

"I be a widower; no kids, though. I lodges with my sister, Mrs. Hunt, you know; she be fairish off and is good to me."

"Then you never had any family?"

"Niver but one—a nesh little girl she were; her lived to be fifteen, and her went to service, and then her pined away somehow. I wur werry sorry, poor thing!"

There was a pause. Salem was staring at the coals, as if to discover the face of his lost child there; then he rubbed his sodden sleeve across his eyes and attacked his pipe, puffing away with a kind of frenzy.

I changed the subject.

"Now the coffee's down, a drop of beer would do you no harm—eh?"

"That it 'oodn't, mister."

I went out and directed my housekeeper to draw a small jug of my strong ale, and returned.

"Now, about the lambing season. Oh, by the by, that's a queer name of yours, Salem. You're not a Churchman, I think?"

"Well, sur, I goes to church now and then; but the Vicar's main slow—niver teks his eyes off 'is book. No, I wur brought up different; feyther wur a Methody. Whoy they give me such a name, I don't know; some'ut to do with Jer-u-salem, ain't it?"

"Yes. I thought you couldn't be a Churchman, with such a name. Oh, here's the ale; better than that at the 'Bull,' you'll find, I think."

Salem took a big pull at the amber fluid, and nodded and blinked his assent to my observation and his relish at the same time.

"Well, tell me about your business. Your folds look clever; how do you make them?"

"What—the yeaning pens? Yes, sur, us shepherds 'as to mek 'em ourselves."

"Tell me how you do it."

"Well, we meks first a few burrow 'urdles."

"*Burrow* hurdles?" I asked. Then I remembered that in the Cotswold district the word "burrow" means not only a rabbit's retreat—at least, in the sense of a *hole*—but a covering or shelter; and that a Cotswold shepherd, when he is going to a spot sheltered from the wind, will say he is going to get "into the burrow"—meaning into shelter, a Saxon word no doubt as old as Alfred's "neat-herd."

"Well, these burrow hurdles, what are they?"

"Well, sur, we teks an 'urdle—you know an 'urdle? We lays it on its side and puts straw on it, and pegs it across with withies, and meks it wind-tight; then we does three more and sets 'em on end and meks a pen, with fower sides loike." He demonstrated the construction with a book or two on my table. "The one side we meks a door on, and leaves part of the pen open, and part we thatches with straw across for a surety—this be the yeaning-pen." This was rather hard to follow, but Salem illustrated his meaning with his hands and my books.

"And you go and watch all night when the lambs are expected?"

"Yuss. There's a bit of waiting; but when the toime to do comes, it's done quick. They leaves me wood and coal to mek a bit o' fire if I want to—to warm mysen. We goos last thing at night, and agen midnight, and fust thing in the morning, to see if all's right—teks a lantern round and looks at all the ship; some ewes we shuts up overnight in the pens, and them as has lambed in the evening; the rest of 'em will be in the open yard with the 'urdles round. It's cold work—when the weather be cold at night; it's then as the lambs seems mostly to come."

"A dreary business. How do you amuse yourself?"

"Not much 'musement; plenty to do, off and on. Mustn't smoke if master knows. I looks at the stars and I thinks a bit sometimes, or I sings a song, and a hymn on Sundays."

"Are there any shepherds' songs?"

"Well, theer's one I knows a bit on—a reg'lar Cotswold song about shepherds."

"How does it go?"

After a long pause and a prolonged stare at the fire, and a pull at the beer-jug, Salem started off in a not unmelodious voice:—

"We shepherds are the best of men that e'er tread English ground,
When we come to an ale-house we care not for a crown;
We spend our money freely, we pay before we go.
There's no ale on the wolds, where the stormy winds do blow."

"So that a shepherds' song, is it? and a Cotswold one, too. Thank ye, Salem. So you fill up your watching time pretty well."

"Yes, but I 'as to be careful. It teks a cliver man sometimes, lambing." Here Salem nodded and blinked at me with evident appreciation of the duties and dangers of his important profession."

"Ever have a companion?"

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THE WILTSHIRE SHEPHERD OF RICHARD JEFFERIES' COUNTRY.
From a drawing by Bertha Newcombe.

"Not I. Wunst theer was a gel as was desperate fond of me and wanted me to marry 'er. She comed and tried to sit up one night; but it wur cold and I wur busy, and she niver comed agen."

"And what do you think of when you are alone?"

"Well, I thinks over what's gone, loike, and the missus and the kids."

"Why, you haven't got either!"

"No, I means the missus and kids as moight ha' bin—you see?"

"Oh, I see, a sort of vision," and I remembered Elia's "dream children" and

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the household that vanished into thin air.

"Ever get frightened?"

"Not I. Theer be nuthin' to fright a man but hisself, as passon says. Once I got a scare, though."

"How was that?"

"I wur a-sitting quite still, when I heerd a kind of a shuffling and sighing like; and I looked up, and theer close to the pen was a some'ut, I couldn't mek out what, big and whitish. I shivered a bit, and my 'air h'isted. Then I seed what it wur and I bust out laughing."

"What was it?"

"Only miller's donkey, with the white blaze on his feace. I soon druv 'im away."

"Well, Salem, finish up your ale. I shall perhaps come out and sit a bit with you one night."

Salem left me and went, warmed and refreshed, home to bed.

The next few nights, by a freak of our wonderful English climate, to which it is so difficult to get accustomed, even in the course of a long life, the weather was actually mild and springlike. When I woke, therefore, in the early morning hours, and had to turn down the bedclothes, feeling rather too warm, I thought of my friend Salem, and was not altogether sorry for him, nor felt his lonely vigil likely to be very unpleasant. My cousin had recently returned from South Africa, and had recounted to me some of his night watches, together with the particulars of one of them, broken by flashes of fire from Boer rifles, and a wild *mêlée* in the darkness, and of a sudden sting that came into his left shoulder which, after the foe was beaten back, cost him a spell in hospital; and I fancied that Bob, however valiant he might be and willing to do his duty, would then not have been at all sorry to have taken Salem's lambing vigil as a change, in the place of those watches when Death might clutch one at any minute, and not even leave much of glory behind. Better the midnight Cotswolds than the wild veldt and the stony kopjes—at least, in my opinion.

Then the very next day the wind chopped round to the north-west, and as I sat over my fire just finishing that "last pipe," which is as sweet—nay, sweeter than anything else in bachelordom, I heard my shutters suddenly rattle and a gust sweep round the corner of my house. The English climate was at its tricks again. I had just finished an improbable story, by one of our young sensational writers, intended to cause horror, but, in my case, at any rate, merely the parent of a smile and a yawn. The wind was increasing in power every minute. The time was then about a quarter past midnight. I thought of Salem. "Poor chap! he will catch it to-night." Then the spirit of the adventures about which I had been reading seemed to come over me, and I thought of my promise to visit the sheep-pens. "I should like the flavour of an adventure, and I will go and see what his lot is at the worst."

So I poured a little whisky in my flask, filled it up with water, put a store of cavendish in my big pouch, got inside my heavy Inverness wrapper, clapped a rough cap upon my head, and went out into the gale. No sooner was I outside my own garden gate than I was nearly blown back again, and the wind almost choked me. There was a feeble, weary-looking new moon in the sky, across which the clouds were driving at headlong speed; a star or two winked out for a second, then disappeared in the folds of cloud. I felt inclined to return to my fireside. "No," I muttered, "I will see what lambing is like in a gale such as this." It was with great difficulty that I held upon my way, for the wind was now furious and I was more than once turned round by the force of it. A slight lull then took place, and I made the most of it by hurrying on towards the scene of poor Salem's vigil. I forgot to say that I had my bicycle-lamp with me, or I could hardly have found my way, though the road was so well known to me. This lamp I kept partly covered by the cape of my Inverness, sending out a flash now and then to fix my whereabouts.

The lull did not last long. A gust blew suddenly and twirled me round. I raised my face. "What is this? Why, snow!" Yes, the night was becoming nasty enough for a sensational story writer. I struggled on, and felt that the snow was covering head and shoulders.

"I suppose Salem will shelter himself somehow," I said; "but snow is about his worst enemy." As I thought this, I came in sight of a dark mass that I knew was the lambing enclosure. My approach could not be heard by anyone in such a gale as was then raging. I reached the entrance of the folds and looked in, and there, sure enough, was Salem, huddled up in a corner with his sack over him, on which snow was falling thickly, and, strange to say, a dark figure sat near—the figure of a girl, bearing a

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shawl over her head, after the North Country fashion. The lantern was in front of them, and I could see a jar of beer, and a mug held by the woman, and something else that might be bread and cheese, or meat, in a cloth tightly tied up. Salem was smoking the forbidden pipe, and his left arm was evidently in the neighbourhood of his companion's waist. They were both white with snow. In the pauses of the gale, faint bleatings could be heard, but no words came from the lips of the pair. "Oh! I see," I said to myself. "Salem's all right. I will not be the marplot." So I turned round all unobserved and fought my way downwards to my dwelling, which I reached rather exhausted and like a tiny iceberg in appearance.

The fire I had left was burning brightly. I poured out some of the whisky I had intended for Salem, had just another pipe to warm my nose, and turned in, musing over the affection and companionship which can make any weather bearable and any lot endurable, and perhaps wondering how, if I had asked Mary—a certain question—last Christmas Eve, would it have been with me?

Then I suppose I fell asleep.

Some three months after this I saw Salem, with a smiling face, coming away from the village church with a buxom wench on his arm and a flower in his buttonhole, a few neighbours with radiant faces following them. Whether this was the same "gel" who tried to sit up, I know not. I believe, however, he has a comely and tidy wife.

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PETER BRADY, MILLIONAIRE.

By OSCAR PARKER.*

"I'M no genius, but I generally find a way to get what I want. Perhaps one reason is that I never let anybody know what I want till I do get it."

Anyone familiar with the career of Peter Brady, an American millionaire, would have cordially agreed that he spoke the truth, and most of them would have gone further and said that he really had a genius for throwing watchers off the true scent, and that he always surrounded any contemplated scheme with a *cheval-de-frise* of ostensible projects, so that his enemies would be deluded into displaying the utmost energy in baffling his apparent plans, only to discover in the end that they had been fighting the wind, and that he stood coolly contemplating their chagrin from the summit of achievement.

Few men at fifty years of age are as physically capable as was Peter Brady. His sturdy frame seemed to meet every strain upon it without flinching. He would travel all night and work all day for days together and be none the worse for it, carrying the threads of a dozen big schemes in his head the whole time, neglecting none of the details, anticipating every form which opposition might take, and never at a loss for a resource. The secret of his physical endurance was his ability to go to sleep anywhere, at any time, and under any circumstances, when he felt that he wanted sleep and could spare the time for it.

In accomplishing his ends he had absolutely no scruples whatever, but he took very good care not to give his enemies—and he had no lack of them—the chance to bring anything in the nature of a criminal charge against him. If he stepped over the line—and I am afraid he did more than once—he left no footprints behind him. Nevertheless, he was one of the kindest-hearted men I ever knew. No genuine case of distress ever appealed to him in vain, and he would take any trouble to oblige a friend.

A stout, well-knit frame, rather undersized, short, thick neck, bullet-shaped head, clean-shaven face, thin, curling hair, turning iron-grey, alert, restless eyes, a quick, nervous manner, a man of few words, but of singularly persuasive speech—such was Peter Brady at fifty. He had been born at very near the bottom of the social ladder, and it is doubtful if he knew his own parentage even. He was simply "Pete" in his boyhood, and had been brought up by a man named Brady, whose cognomen he took when he found that a family name was a necessary tag. To a good many of his cronies he was still "Pete," and would be no doubt till he died. Education had not come in his way, except the very rough education of experience in a hard school, but he knew his deficiencies and never pretended to be what he was not. He had no false pride and never boasted even of his achievements. When he trusted a man, he trusted him implicitly; but if his faith were once betrayed, let the betrayer take heed to himself, for Brady had no mercy.

Some of his earliest speculations, in which he laid the foundations of his big fortune, would be worth telling. They exhibited much of the audacity and all the sureness of touch and self-reliance of his later and more magnificent *coups*, even if on a smaller scale; but my first acquaintance with him was made in connection with a clever stroke of business that forms as good an illustration of his style as any incident I could select.

It was in the days of the "oil fever" in Pennsylvania, when fortunes were made in a day. Many an impecunious wretch, who had cleared a few acres of land with infinite toil, and just kept soul and body in company by farming the thin soil, got up one morning at daybreak to a meagre breakfast of pork and beans and a day's grievous work at hoeing his corn and potatoes, and went to bed at night gloriously drunk in the best room of the best hotel in the nearest town, with Government notes for many thousand dollars in his pockets. Others, more alive to their opportunities, held on to their land for a bigger bid, or contracted for wells to be bored on their property for a percentage of all the petroleum raised. Whoever had farms in the line of the "oil belt" got

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sucked into the mad current of speculation. Wells were sunk all over the district; tanks run up to hold the wealth that came spouting out of the ground; railways were pushed forward at breakneck speed; pipe lines curled and twisted up the valleys like snakes, lengthening as they writhed onwards; the very streams bore a thick overlay of oil, their banks many-coloured with an iridescent scum. The whole country reeked with the smell, taste, sight of crude petroleum, inexpressibly nasty, but driving men wild with the infinite possibilities of wealth.

Brady entered the sleeping-car on the train leaving Bellport at midnight going east to Harrisburg and Philadelphia. His confidential clerk accompanied him to the station and entered the car with him, noting down some final instructions.

"Wire me to Philadelphia in the morning if Thompson has signed that contract."

"Continental Hotel, I suppose?"

"Yes; and let Gray know I shall not be in New York before to-morrow night, and to have those bonds ready."

"Yes, sir. Anything else?"

"No. Oh! that little affair of your brother's. Tell him I'll see Tom Scott and get him to ask Cameron to use his influence to get the appointment."

"Thank you very much; it will be the saving of him. Good-night, sir."

"Good-night."

"Who is that man?" I asked a solitary companion, who had also entered the car at Bellport and now shared with me the smoking compartment at the rear, while the negro porter was making up our berths.

"Brady is his name. Peter Brady, worth a mint of money, but as tough a rascal as you'll come across in a twelvemonth."

"He seems glib enough with big names. I suppose by Tom Scott he means the President of the Pennsylvania Railway, and by Cameron the United States Senator."

"Oh, yes, he knows all the thieves going. I wonder what he's up to now?"

"You heard what he said?"

"That is no sign, even of where he's going."

"Berths all ready, gemmen!" said the porter, putting his black face into the smoking compartment at this moment. "Take your ticket, sar, so you won't be disturbed?"

I chose to sit up a while longer, and when I did turn in found I could not sleep. A deep, baying snore came from the berth just across the corridor, into which I had seen Mr. Brady vanish. What little I had seen of the man interested me, in spite of the uncomplimentary character I had heard given him, and I fell to speculating about him. After a time I pulled back one of the heavy curtains that swung before my berth, in order to get more air, and lay thinking, occasionally half dozing, for a long time—over two hours, as I afterwards found.

I was disturbed, perhaps by the cessation of the snoring, and opening my eyes, saw Mr. Brady cautiously part his curtains and peer up and down the corridor. Then he got up, slipped on his shoes and coat, and disappeared somewhere forwards. In a few moments I followed suit, and came on my man chatting easily with the negro porter, like old friends.

They both looked up at me in some surprise. I explained my presence by saying that I couldn't sleep, and found my berth hot and stuffy. The train began pulling up as for a station, and the porter left us, returning presently with a small travelling bag and a light overcoat. Acting on a sudden and unreasoned impulse, I told him to fetch my luggage also. As I anticipated, Mr. Brady left the train when it stopped, and I did the same. The porter put our luggage on a seat on the platform, accepted the usual quarter dollar from each of us, grinned, touched his cap, remounted the train, and away it sped again, leaving Mr. Brady and me alone at something after two, on a dark and rather chilly morning.

In all this time not a word had been exchanged between us, but now Brady, who stood with his hands in the pockets of his tightly buttoned covert coat, giving his short, square figure a shake as if he felt the chill, opened the conversation.

"You're an Englishman, aren't you?"

"How did you know?"

"Because you said 'luggage,' and treated the nigger like a man instead of a brute. Do you know this place?"

"I haven't the faintest idea."

"I thought not."

"To tell the truth," said I, "I am an English journalist, and I am travelling for pleasure and for copy. When you boarded the train at Bellport, I got rather a captivating description of you, and at present I am shadowing you, to get what I can out of you."

He kept a penetrating gaze on my face while I was saying this, which certainly did not lack in blunt impudence. I was wondering how he would take it, when a faint smile, a

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"'Crept along the track close under the car.'"

trifle sardonic, came over his lips. "I rather like your style," said he. "If you care to come along with me, I'll show you some fun."

I do not need to say that I jumped at the chance. I gave him my name, told him I knew his, and we started perambulating the length of the station platform. "I'm going West," he said, "on a train that stops here in half an hour."

"Back to Bellport?" I asked.

"Yes, and beyond. I have to double on my tracks like this sometimes."

I thought it best not to ask questions or show any inquisitiveness. I was fairly launched on the adventure, and was willing to wait for revelations. In due time a train came whistling up to the station, and I followed Mr. Brady into a luxurious private car at the extreme rear, which seemed to be reserved for his special use, as I found only two black servants in possession, and no one else intruded upon us.

"Make yourself at home," said Brady. "There's a sofa you can sleep on, or you can have a berth made up in a jiffy. Have anything to eat or drink?"

I confess to a cocktail, and my companion and host had a cup of coffee strong enough to have kept me awake for the rest of the night. As it was, I did not sleep well, but he, divesting himself of coat, waistcoat and shoes, lay down in a berth that had been prepared for him in advance, and was asleep in thirty seconds after.

When day broke we were travelling through a very wild country, endless forests, with an

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occasional clearing, and now and then a poverty-stricken farm, looking forlorn enough in the heart of the pine woods. Our coloured cook served us up a sumptuous breakfast, and when that was disposed of, my host asked me to do him a favour. "I want to know if there is a certain man on this train," said he, "and I don't want to show myself. He's a pock-marked, bloodless-looking chap, with a short, grey beard and a smooth upper lip. His name is Staines. You can saunter through the train and then back again, but don't hurry. We've an hour yet."

I was willing enough to oblige him, and came back in half an hour with my report. "There's a man here who answers to your description. I dropped into an empty seat behind him and heard a man sitting beside him address him as Staines. They were discussing oil-finds chiefly."

The curious sort of light I have seen come into a soldier's eyes on the eve of going into battle flashed from Brady's face, and his whole figure seemed to stiffen and brace itself.

"It's something gained," said he, "to know he is on the job, and that he doesn't suppose I am any nearer than three hundred miles; but he'll suspect if he hears there's a private car on the train, and come snooping around. Do you think you can play up to be host for a bit—an English duke or something doing the States in style, while I retire into obscurity? Say you're visiting the oil-fields for curiosity."

I undertook the part, and Brady gave some instructions to the two negroes and the train conductor as if he owned the whole road, and when we pulled up at a station where a stop was made for breakfast, I sat down in plain view from the station platform, while Brady disappeared in a tiny compartment off the kitchen, which seemed planned for a hiding-place. It could only be reached through the kitchen, and on the outside appeared to be part of that compartment.

The passengers streamed out of the train and across the platform to the dining-room, and presently I saw Staines and his companion among them. The former glanced along the train and stopped abruptly when his eye rested on the private car. Instead of going into breakfast, he sought out the conductor, with whom I saw him in earnest conversation. Then he lounged along the platform, eyed me very attentively as he passed, and soon after I heard him talking to one of the negroes in the rear of the car. The door leading into the main saloon where I was sitting opened and Mr. Staines himself looked in.

"Beg pardon, sir," he said, "you are doing this thing in good style."

"That's my privilege, I believe," I answered.

"What might you be paying for this car per diem now?"

"That's my business," I retorted.

"Well, no offence, sir. I shouldn't mind putting up with you if you are going to the oil-country. I could show you round there considerable."

"Thank you," said I, "I am going for pleasure and curiosity only. I presume you are going on business?"

"Well, there's always a chance to pick up a bit where the chances are so thick."

Staines had got well into the saloon by this time, and now dropped into an easy chair and coolly crossed his legs. I mentally confounded his impudence, but was, nevertheless, not a little amused by it.

"You'll lose your breakfast, won't you?" said I, with a gesture towards the station.

"Oh! that's all right," he replied calmly, "your nigger can broil me a chop or something when we start again," and then he launched out into a description of the country we were going to, the rich finds that were being made every day, and the opportunities thus afforded for any man with a "decent pile behind him to turn up a few hundred thousands before you can wink, sir."

I meanwhile was meditating how I could best get rid of him without breeding any suspicions detrimental to Brady's plans.

When the train started again, I determined to take counsel, and, saying I would see the cook about that breakfast for which my uninvited guest had so broadly hinted, I went back to the kitchen and, passing through it, reported the situation to Brady in his cosy little den.

"The brute won't go!" I explained. "What am I to do with him? Pitch him out?"

"You just let him stay," said Brady. "Can you play poker?"

I admitted some amateurish knowledge of the game.

"Well, then, get him to invite his friend into this car and propose a game with 'em. When Jim, the waiter, comes in to lay the cloth for Staines's breakfast the train will be standing, and do you slip out and hustle into the next car forward for all you're worth. Leave the rest to me."

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My proposition, when I got back to Staines, seemed to suit that gentleman immensely, and he went to get his friend, who was introduced to me as a Mr. Goodman. Jim produced some cards and counters, and before long we were "ante"-ing and "calling" and "raising," and generally disporting ourselves as if poker were the one absorbing occupation of life. My mind was too intent on other matters to play a very skilful hand. The train stopped at two or three little wayside stations, and then again apparently in the very heart of the forest, and presently began backing. Staines seemed to have forgotten all about his breakfast, he was so absorbed in the game. "Your call," he said to his friend, whom I had found by this time was a lawyer.

"Two cards," said Goodman, "and I straddle the blind."

"Breakfast ready, sir," Jim announced, as he entered with a spotless cloth over his arm, and I knew this was the signal for me to act.

"Curse the breakfast!" muttered Staines. "I'll go a fiver better."

"I'm out of this hand," said I. "Excuse me a minute," and I walked forward, opened the door into the front compartment and closed it, dashed out and over the platforms of the two rear cars, while a train hand was uncoupling the private car. The next moment we started again, and Brady stepped up beside me, where I stood watching the private car now being rapidly left behind, until it disappeared as the train swung round a curve. We had parted from it in about as desolate a spot as it was possible to conceive, with Staines and Goodman calmly playing out their game. What the calm would end in when they discovered, as they soon must, how they had been literally and figuratively "left," I could only imagine.

"He held options to buy fifty thousand acres of rich territory," explained Mr. Brady, with a ruminating air, "for a song, and his options expire at noon to-day. He'll be late; I'm sorry for him, but I don't see how I can help him now."

"How did you get here without Staines seeing you?" I queried.

"Easy enough," said he, with a shrug and a short, contemptuous laugh, "I got down by the back platform and crept along the track close under the car. I had sent a note by Jim to the conductor to telegraph in my name to Harrisburg for authority to leave my car at that siding, and we got a reply at one of the stations we stopped at. There's no trouble in these matters if you know your ground."

In another half hour we reached a junction where Brady informed me a branch line would have to be taken to the oil-fields. A train was in waiting, but he showed no anxiety to board it, and to my surprise let it go without us. Five minutes later an engine drew up to the platform.

"We are going back to see how Staines's game is coming on," explained my leader, mounting to the cab, while I scrambled up after him. We went dashing down the main line back to the siding where we had left the private car, and when we came in sight of it, we saw Staines and Goodman standing on the end platform. We drew up alongside; we on the main line, they on the siding. I looked for an explosion of wrath from Staines, perhaps something more violent, but he did not open his lips, nor did Goodman.

Brady leaned against the side of the cab facing them, as imperturbably cool as at any moment during our acquaintance. "How are you, Staines?" said he. "Enjoyed your game?"

"Yes. What's yours?"

"I've got the call, Staines. I want to buy some options you've got in your pocket."

"Suppose I won't sell?"

"Then you'll lose what you paid for 'em."

"Do you mean you'll leave us here?"

"That's about the size of it, Staines. Why, ain't you comfortable? Jim, ain't you taking care of these gentlemen? Giving them all they want to eat and drink and smoke?"

"Oh! he's all right," grumbled Staines. "But I'd like nothing better than to put a hole through you, Brady."

My millionaire laughed. "Keep your temper, Staines. Introduce your friend."

"Never mind!" said Goodman, speaking for the first time, and his voice trembling with passion. "You haven't heard the last of this, Mr. Brady."

"Oh! don't threaten, sir. I know what I'm about. You're a lawyer, I believe. You'll find pen and ink in that car. Jim, accommodate the gentleman with pen and ink. Just draw up an assignment of those options Staines holds, and witness his signature, will you? I've got the greenbacks here, Staines.. I'll give you what they cost you, but I must have them inside fifteen minutes, or here you stay while I go on. It's a plain business matter, and there's no time to lose—put up or pass."

Mr. Staines knew his man, knew that he

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"'I want to buy some options you've got in your pocket.'"

himself stood to lose every penny he had paid if he were left in the wilderness, and had no doubt but Brady, who could still get to his destination in time to be on the field when the options expired, would be able to buy the lands as soon as they were on the market again. "The game's up," he said to Goodman, and turned back into the car. Brady lit a cigar and waited in silence. In ten minutes Staines appeared again on the platform alone, and with the papers in his hands. It was a queer office for transacting business amounting to a good many thousand dollars. The pine forest was all about us. Not a sound broke the silence except the gentle puffing of the locomotive we stood on, and across the way stood Brady's private car, strangely out of place in its wild surroundings.

I discovered then that Brady had a novel use for the hip-pocket in his trousers. He drew out of that safe depository a roll of Government notes, or "greenbacks," which,

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judging from its size and the fact that they all appeared to be of the denomination of one thousand dollars, must have represented a pretty substantial fortune in themselves; he took the documents from Staines's hands, glanced through them hurriedly, even superficially, as it seemed to me, asked me to jot down a brief column of figures, which I footed up at twenty-seven thousand eight hundred and fifty dollars. Then he counted out twenty-eight thousand-dollar notes, passed them across to Staines, saying: "You can give me credit for the odd hundred and fifty, or hand that amount over to your lawyer for his services. And now good-bye, Staines. Enjoy yourselves till evening, when I will pick you up on my way east again"; and then to the driver of our engine: "Pull her off on to the other track, engineer, and hustle back all you know how."

By eleven o'clock we were in the thick of a perfect hell of speculative fever. Brady negotiated all the purchases for which Staines had obligingly provided him with options, and by five o'clock that afternoon was ready to return. I asked him if he could give me any idea what he had made by the day's work. "That's hard to say," he answered. "I can tell you, though, that I wouldn't take a quarter of a million for my bargain, and it may turn out worth a good deal more. I am real sorry for Staines, but he ought not to have put his head into my den. It wasn't nice in him."

"How would you have met him," I asked with natural curiosity, "if he had got to the ground before you?"

He smiled. "We don't give that away," he answered. "I had a plan worked out, but that will do for another time."

We took an east-bound train at the junction, picked up Brady's car at the siding in the woods, where we found Staines and Goodman sound asleep, with convincing evidences that a good deal of whisky had been consumed in their enforced rustication. Once more I passed through Bellport at midnight, just twenty-four hours since I had first seen Pete Brady. He had kept his promise. I had seen "some fun."

The next morning we woke up and breakfasted in Philadelphia.

WORK.

MINE is the shape forever set between
The thought and form, the vision and the deed;
The hidden light, the glory all unseen,
I bring to mortal senses, mortal need.

Who loves me not, my sorrowing slave is he,
Bent with a burden, knowing oft the rod;
But he who loves me shall my master be,
And use me with the joyance of a god.

Man's lord or servant, still I am his friend;
Desire for me is simple as his breath;
Yea, waiting, old and toilless, for the end,
He prays that he may find me after death.

MARGARET STEELE ANDERSON.

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AFTER THE RUN.

HUNTING MAN: Splendid scent this morning, Miss Townley.
MISS TOWNLEY (who knows nothing about hunting): How lovely! Eau de Cologne, or Jockey Club?

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

THE LATEST SCIENTIFIC MARVEL.

"EUREKA!" I heard exclaimed, as I turned the door handle of the great inventor's laboratory and entered.

"You find me on the eve of a great discovery," said the great man himself, glancing up from mountainous piles of fresh-scrawled diagrams.

"Indeed?" I asked, happy in the occasion of my visit. "Something entirely new?"

The inventor hastily closed the door and gave an anxious glance round among the stuffed alligators, skeletons, and other "impedimenta" of the room, to make sure that we were alone; then he almost chuckled, as he whispered—

"On the contrary, everything that's old."

"Eh, what?" I exclaimed.

"Has it never occurred to you," he said, "what vast numbers of things are yearly—daily—hourly lost?"

"I suppose there are a good lot," I agreed, somewhat puzzled.

"Umbrellas, for instance. Which of us——"

"Exactly," I said; "I——" But he would suffer no interruption. "Which of us," he continued, "has not lost at least a dozen umbrellas, to say nothing of sticks, and pipes, and penknives, and pencils? The question that presented itself to me was: 'Where are they?' The surface of the world is not large; they are not on that surface; they are not dug from beneath it; they are certainly not in the clouds. Where are they?"

"They must be somewhere," I said.

"I have here a few statistics," he continued, selecting some closely written sheets from the mass upon the table. "They deal with the yearly loss of certain well-known articles in the five largest cities of Europe only."

He mentioned a number. I know that it consisted of a good many millions, and ended up with eleven.

"This list, remember," he continued, "does not include such things as collar-studs, portmanteau keys, scissors, and other familiar objects of the losing faculty. Look at the phenomenon also from another point of view. The population even of civilised countries takes a considerable time to double itself. One would think that very many years ago there would have been enough sticks, scissors, collar-studs, etc., etc., to supply any possible demand for centuries to come. But what do we see? Millions of these articles produced every month. I have on this paper some statistics dealing with the weekly output of scissors and penknives alone in the United Kingdom."

He quoted the figures. They were truly appalling.

"These things are practically indestructible, yet where are they—our lost collar-studs, penknives, scissors, and the thousand and one other articles we daily look for in vain? I have made some computations on the subject, and find that the area of Europe being"—he named the square miles and odd acres—"these lost articles, if still lying on the surface, would represent an average thickness of from nine to nine and a half inches. We don't have to wade through walking-sticks and scissors to a depth of nearly a foot. They are, therefore, not on the surface. Where are they?"

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WHAT OUR ASTRONOMERS MUST ENDURE.

THE CURATE: The sun, young ladies, is about ninety-five million miles from the earth; and supposing a railway train were to do the journey, it would take one thousand seven hundred and sixty-five years, seven months, and twenty-one days.
MISS BROWN: I wonder how much a season ticket would cost?

"Perhaps they have fallen into the sea," I suggested after much thought.

"I have not forgotten that in my calculations," he replied. "One person in ten thousand is on the sea at a given time, and one in a thousand by the seaside. The rest of us have to lose our things on land."

He began to search for further statistics, but I told him I would take his word for it.

"You must not forget," he said, "that amongst the *débris* of comparatively worthless articles there is a vast accumulation of fabulous worth of jewellery and coins. There are pearls worth a king's ransom, and diamonds that people would sell their soul for."

His voice was harsh with eagerness and his eye lit up with zeal—purely scientific zeal, of course.

"The question I put to myself," he continued, "was how these things were to be found, and, in order to answer it, I found the further puzzle before me—how were they lost?"

"Ah! how?" I said. It seemed a puzzler

"Some one way, I suppose, and some another."

"No," he broke in sharply. "All in one way. The solution is absurdly simple. It is our senses—our consciousness as a whole—which gives to objects their quality of being material. A thing is material because we touch it, smell it, see it. That's the A B C of philosophy."

"Of course," I agreed.

"When a thing is no longer affected by the consciousness of any body, it ceases to be material. That's how things are lost. By and by, perhaps, you remember the thing again, but the link is broken—the 'mediation,' as I term it, is absent or inadequate—and you can't materialise the penknife, or whatever it is. You have to go out and buy another. The reason is, I have been compelled to assume, that you are unable to recall strongly or accurately enough the idea of the thing you are seeking. I use the word 'idea' in the Platonic sense."

"Quite so, quite so," I said.

"You see now—indeed, it must be obvious to you at once—how things are lost, and why, when lost, they are not encumbering the surface of the earth. In order to appear again they have to be materialised, and in order to be materialised, some form of mediation must be established between us and the thing. That was what I had to find, and I think," he added, as he proceeded to some covered object at the other end of the room—"I think that I have found it."

With a trembling hand he removed the cover and disclosed a most curious looking instrument. Of its component parts I, not being a scientific man, can give no accurate description. I can only say that on the top was a rather large crystal ball, and beneath a strange, clock-like instrument. At the side was a funnel pointing downwards and widening as it did so, while a large wicker basket stood beneath.

"One moment," said the great discoverer, as he detached from the clock-like instrument a tiny

THE LATEST.

"I SAY, doctor, what is the matter with Jones? Why does he always sit in that absurd position?"

"We haven't decided what we will call it yet. Probably 'moto-mania.'"

spring and inserted in its place another, so far I could judge, exactly like it.

"Ah! that will do," he said at length, and then addressed me in a voice quivering with emotion. "You, my friend, shall be the first to make trial of the greatest, the most stupendous discovery of this or any other age. Advance and look into the crystal."

I did so.

"The hitherto tried functions of the crystal are, I imagine, familiar to you," he said. "In it one observes persons and things one has every reason to believe are far away. I wish you to make a more active use of its powers. Gaze fixedly at the crystal and picture to yourself any object you know to have been lost—the pearls from Queen Elizabeth's state dress, the Chamberlain telegram, anything. Something you have lost yourself, for instance." I did so, and in a few seconds, there I saw it lying in the crystal—my lost umbrella, just as I had last seen it, badly rolled up and rather muddy, but resplendent with its knob of gold.

"It should be enough," said the professor, drawing me from the crystal and gazing eagerly into the wicker basket. When he lifted his face again, it showed the signs of bitter disappointment.

"There is nothing there," he said.

"Let's look in the umbrella-stand," I ventured to suggest.

For a moment he hesitated. He gave a look of protest, a motion as though to prevent me, but my scientific ardour carried me to the door.

There it was, in the umbrella-stand, back from the world of ideas, rematerialised, slightly damp from the process. I grasped it and turned to shake the professor warmly by the hand.

"We live in the age of science!" I exclaimed. ***Harold White.***

THE OTHER LATEST.

"POOR dear George! You don't mean to say you've got gout at your age?"

"No, dear; merely a slight attack of 'ping-pong heel'!"

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"AYE, MADAM, IT IS COMMON."

When I fell in love, for the first time I knew
(My wounded pride may feel as it may)
My sisterhood the whole world through
With those I had reckoned of commoner clay.

The country-girl with her clumsy Colin,
The nursery-maid with her soldier-man,
The ladye-fair with her passionate poet,—
They are all a part of the hackneyed plan.

And this is the truth I've learned to discover
Which warms my heart to the common fry—
That every other fool of a lover
Is just such a commonplace fool as I!

Annie C. Muirhead.

IRISH SQUIRE (speaking to Biddy, whose good-looking daughter has made an excellent marriage): Well, Biddy, I hear your daughter has done well for herself, and made a very good match.

BIDDY: Yes, your Honour, she has indade. Ye should see her carriages and horses, and her coachmen and futmen, and the jools av her are just beautiful, and indade (in an awe-struck whisper), she *strips* for dinner!

Two rather smart young men were taking a country walk when they came upon a "yokel" sitting on a gate. They both immediately hit upon the idea of having some fun at the poor man's expense. One of them, after explaining to the other how he was going to make a fool of the fellow, began forthwith to question the yokel as follows: "My man, have you seen a cartload of monkeys pass this way to-day?" Before he got any farther, the yokel had interrupted him by blandly replying: "Why? 'Ave you two tumbled off?"

AN Irish peasant woman, who had never travelled by train before, took a third class ticket to Limerick and ensconced herself comfortably in a first class carriage, not knowing any difference. Presently the ticket collector came along.

"Good morning," said he. "First class, Mary?"

"Yes," replied she, "first class, thank you; how's yourself?"

But somehow he didn't seem satisfied.

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AN EASTER HYMN.

FROM THE PICTURE BY WALTHER FIRLE.

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LOVERS ON AN ISLAND.

By BARRY PAIN.*

"HOW sweet it would be," said Isobel, "to remain here for ever, in this lovely little island in the middle of the big lonely lake, just you and I, Willy!"

"Table d'hôte at 7.30," said William gloomily, "and we've got to get back for it. And then we shan't get another moment alone together till after nine. And even then we shan't, unless we wander off into the garden together, and the last time we did that we were accused of selfishness. We're all right, but I can't make out what the rest of the world was made for."

Truly it was an enchanting island, with tall trees where the herons built, and grey, moss-grown boulders where shy, rare lizards sunned themselves, and stretches of bracken. Here for a brief hour they had been quite out of the world. But it was five o'clock, and it would take them nearly two hours to get back to hateful civilisation, and hateful civilisation demanded them acidly and peremptorily.

"Listen," said Isobel, "to the little wavelets talking nonsense all round the coast—making love to the silence. Oh! this fragment of pure, sequestered Nature—Nature as sweet as she always is when she is left to herself!"

"And we're going back," said William, "to that inferior pot-house masquerading as a first-class hotel under the guidance of an intelligent Swiss. Back to the sole that is really plaice, and to the *crême de volaille* with a quadrupedal origin, and to the lamb that is frozen and the peas that are tinned. And at the next table will be the Reverend Father with the indigestion, and the mature lady with the conversation, and the satisfied American who tells us what he will do with this country when he has bought it."

"I don't like the people," said Isobel. "And mamma doesn't like them, either. And the dinner isn't nearly as good as it looks and sounds. But all the same, you think too much about food. You're too material."

"I'm particularly spiritual by nature," said William modestly. "But at dinner food is rather thrust on your attention, and I have an honest man's hatred of imitations. Otherwise my wants are few. A loaf of bread, a jug—or just the ordinary bottle—of wine, and thou beside me singing in the wilderness, and nobody need trouble about me further; in fact, I wouldn't insist on the bread. It's—— Good heavens!"

They had just come round the corner to the landing-stage, and in one flash of an eye William had realised that the boat in which he had rowed Isobel across to the island was no longer there.

"The boat's got away!" cried Isobel in anguish.

"So I was observing, and I'm afraid it's my fault. I can't make it out, for the knot that I tied can't slip or go wrong. The harder the boat pulled, the tighter the knot would get. If there were—or had been—anyone on the island besides ourselves, I should say that someone had been having a little game with us."

"Oh, Willy! I've remembered. Can you forgive me?"

"Not at present, because I've got nothing to forgive. But if you'll provide the material——"

"It was my fault—all my fault. It was while you were struggling with our fire to boil the kettle. I slipped back to the boat to get my parasol, and it was right at the other end of the boat; and I untied it to pull it round, and then I tied it up again; and I suppose that was it."

"That's all right," said William.

"But what will everybody think? And what will they do?"

"Well, with our customary secretiveness, we never said where we were going. They know that we took the tea-basket and a rug." He had been carrying these, and he now put them down. "And that's all they know. We might be up one of the many noble

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mountains that give this desolate country its attraction for the tourist. We might be over at the ruined abbey. The lake is three miles away from the hotel, and may never occur to them at all. About half-past eight or nine they will begin search-partying, but they won't have the faintest idea where to search. If we had hired the boat, the man who let it could have been depended upon to rescue us. But this is Jefferson's private boat, which he gave me the use of, and I doubt very much if anybody saw us unlock the boat-house and get it out. If we'd been trying to steal the boat, we should have had some of his men round us in no time. So, taking one consideration with another, we shall certainly be rescued, but quite possibly it won't be till to-morrow morning."

"It's perfectly awful. But I'm quite sure someone will come for us long before that. Don't look so downhearted, Willy; it will only mean that your dear dinner will be put off for an hour or two. I don't mind it a bit. It's rather adventurous and romantic."

"Yes, but there's just a chance that it will be beastly uncomfortable for you, if we have to stop here all night. That's what I don't like."

"We aren't going to stop here. Some other boat will come over."

"Bit late in the day for it."

"Well, something's certain to happen. It always does on desert islands. Now, what ought we to do?"

"I'm told there are a lot of queer cross-currents in the lake, and it's quite possible our boat may have drifted in again. We'll just go round the island and look. Or I'll go alone, if you're tired."

"Not a bit. I'll go one way and you'll go the other, and we'll meet. Then we shall do it in half the time."

The entire circuit of the island could be made in twenty minutes, and they had in all probability many vacant hours before them. But there is a joy in saving time even when it is a very little time and you have no particular use for it. Old gentlemen of an obese habit will run to catch a train on the Underground when there is another in three minutes, and then there are inquests.

So William and Isobel encircled the island. But they found no trace whatever of their boat. Isobel said she had been quite sure from the start that that would never do.

"And now," she said, "I know what."

"Well. What is it?"

"We must try smoke signals. They're often used by the natives, you know."

"Natives of where?"

"How should I know? Just plain natives you get in travel-books."

"I see," said William gravely. And then they set to work collecting bracken for the smoke-signal. One of Jefferson's gardeners was to see it, answer it, and start to the rescue at once. Of that Isobel felt quite sure. In the meantime, her word "travel-books" had started her on a train of thought as she gathered the bracken.

"Willy, dearest," she said suddenly, "we ought to have a barrel of pickled pork, very little injured by the sea-water. People always have that on desert islands."

"They do," said William. "It is washed up from the wreck. They've lost their parents in the wreck, but they don't think nearly so much about losing their parents as about finding that barrel. However, it's no good complaining. We've got no pickled pork, and no sea-water to damage it with."

"We've got no wreck," said Isobel—"that's the initial mistake. When you're cast up on a desert island, you have the wrecked vessel fixed firmly on the adjacent coral reef. That is so in the story-books, and it comes in very usefully, for that wreck does not stop at pickled pork. Anything you want, from a steam-crane to a tooth-pick, is washed out of the captain's cabin and delivered safely on the beach at your feet next morning."

"Yes, I know that wreck. It's a gratis, with the tide as the vans."

"I don't know that I don't miss the patent desert island's animals even more. You know those animals? They're wild, but not so very wild. When George, or any of the desert-island family, gets hold of them, they become rapidly docile. George finds a hippopotamus and treats it kindly. Next day it is still a little shy; but by the end of the week George is driving it tandem in a curricle (washed up from the wreck, of course), with an iguana as leader."

"What's an iguana?"

"Haven't the faintest idea; but I'm pretty certain I've come across it in the desert-island stories. We've got nothing of the kind here. We haven't even got the deep, dark forest of eucalyptus and opodeldoc, with the monkeys swinging in it, all packed with bread-fruit, guava jelly, and ripe bananas. Oh! this is nothing of a desert island, and I don't care how soon we get out of it!"

"*Varia et mutabilis semper!* An hour ago you didn't care how long we stopped here."

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"Isobel strained her eyes to see a boat."

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"Yes," said Isobel; "but there's a difference between stopping because you want to stop and stopping because you can't get away. Here, we must have got enough bracken for our fire by now."

William struck a match. The dry fern blazed freely, and a column of smoke went up on the still air. But no answering signal came from the mainland, and gradually they realised that their fire had not been seen, or had not been understood. Isobel strained her eyes to see a boat being rowed towards them, but no boat came.

"This begins to be a nuisance," she said impatiently. "It's nearly seven, and I am simply faint with hunger and fatigue."

"What a fool I was to let you tire yourself with gathering that bracken!" said William. "However, I'll bring up the rug and the tea-basket, and we must do the best we can. Very likely your smoke-signal was seen, and they're on the way to us by now."

"On the way to us? They'd have been here by this time. You said yourself we shouldn't get off before to-morrow, and I don't for a moment suppose we shall get off then. It gets frightfully cold at night, too. Never mind; it can't be helped. It was silly of me to let you arrange things, that's all."

Decidedly fatigue, hunger, and disappointment were doing deadly work with Isobel's temper.

II.

"LUCKILY," said William, as he unscrewed the stopper of the bottle, "when one goes on a tea-picnic, one always takes far too much milk. That milk will be very useful now. Milk is a food, you know; one doesn't starve when one has milk."

"Who says that milk is a food?"

"The doctors say so."

"Well, I say milk is not a food. Milk's a drink. You drink it; you don't eat it. How can it be a food?"

William—good-natured and pusillanimous—said that the doctors were very likely wrong; doctors often were.

"And there's only about a teacupful of it," said Isobel.

"I never touch milk myself, except in tea," lied William. "It makes me ill. Lots of men are like that."

"I'm almost certain I've seen you drink it."

"Never. Unfortunately, we used all the tea at tea-time. In fact, we seem to have used everything. There are a few biscuits, and—ah! any amount of butter."

"How many biscuits will there be each?"

"Oh! I'm not going to spoil my dinner by eating anything now."

"There isn't going to be any dinner," said Isobel in tones of the deepest melancholy.

"We shan't get it for two or three hours, perhaps, but I'm certain we shall get it ultimately. We'll get off this accursed island somehow. Cheer up, Isie!"

Isobel did her best to smile faintly. She let herself be persuaded into drinking all the milk and eating all the biscuits, and her conscience smote her. She was a very good girl, and as a rule her conscience had little to do; so on the rare occasions when her conscience did get to work, it did not always work in the most approved manner. Here, for instance, it urged her to prove that she was quite right.

"I'm quite sure," she said, "that you think I'm in a horribly bad temper, Willy."

William laughed. "Not a bit of it. Naturally, this isn't much fun for you."

"I wasn't thinking of myself," said Isobel, with, I fear, a touch of the Christian martyr in her voice. "I was thinking about poor mamma and the others. How terribly anxious they'll be! Have you thought of that?"

"Yes; but they won't have begun to be anxious yet. They won't begin to be really troubled before nine. We've been late for dinner before, sometimes, you know."

"Yes, and they've talked to us about it. And we promised that we would never be late again."

"Well, it's not really our fault this time."

"We know that, of course, and our own people will know it, too, and believe it. But will the rest of the people in the hotel believe it, or will they believe we did it on purpose? It's horrible! It's compromising!"

"We've been engaged a year. We are to be married next month."

"That doesn't stop people's tongues."

"There are lots of ways of stopping people's tongues," said William darkly.

By this time Isobel had quite justified herself in her own mind, and believed that she had a legitimate cause for grievance.

"It's really rather too bad," she said. "Naturally, I leave you to manage everything. One always leaves it to the man. Then you bring me to this horrible place, and then you go and lose the boat. And you don't seem to have the faintest idea what to do to get us away again. An emergency like this is a test, and you really

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don't come out of it very well. It destroys one's confidence. One doesn't feel that one can depend on you to get one through. You can only just stand there and talk."

This was severe on the island. It had been a "fragment of pure, sequestered Nature"; it was now a "horrible place." It was severe on William, too; for, after all, it was Isobel, and not he, who had lost the boat; and if he did nothing, it was chiefly because there was nothing to do. Isobel was on the verge of tears and at her consummate worst.

"I'm most awfully sorry," said William. "I know how trying it must be for you. I'll go and get the stuff together for another fire; it will show up better when it is dark."

"You can try it, of course," said Isobel resignedly.

III.

WILLIAM went, and at that moment his luck turned right round. At first he could hardly believe his eyes. There was the boat, brought back by the queer currents of the lake, drifting quietly along, as if it had never done anything wrong in its life.

"Isie!" he called. "It's all right. Come along home."

She came running towards him. He pointed out the boat.

"Return of the wanderer," he said.

"Yes, but it's drifting away from us. And even now it's quite out of reach."

"I'm prepared to bet one hundred pounds to one hayseed that it is not out of my reach," said William. "Please hold my coat for a minute."

He waded the first part of the way, and swam the rest, and he brought back the boat. As he stood on the shore, panting and wringing the water from his clothes as well as he could, Isobel's conscience smote her once more, and by this time it had got into thorough working order and smote hard and truly.

"Willy! You're soaked, and you'll simply catch your death of cold."

"Not I. Rowing will keep me warm. If you'll just catch hold here, I'll fetch the basket and rug."

When he came back, he found her repeating with all the solemnity of a Litany: "I am a beast. I am a pig. I won't forgive myself. I'll never, never, never forgive myself."

"Hul—lo!" he exclaimed. "What's all the trouble?"

"I'm ashamed of myself. I'm very sorry. You may give me up altogether if you like. It would only serve me right."

"Afraid I can't. Not got time, for one thing. Tumble in, sweetheart. All right? Off we go, then!"

As he pulled hard away from the island, she continued: "It was simply splendid, the way you brought that boat in. I never saw anything like it. It was magnificent. And to think that you did it all for the stupid, spiteful, cowardly she-cat that I am!"

"I say, don't go on like that," said William, "or you'll make me laugh. And I can't laugh and pull at the same time. To think that I sneered at the intelligent Swiss who runs our hotel! Shan't I fly at his warmed-up garbages as soon as I get a chance?"

"I do wish you hadn't gone into the water like that."

"It won't do me any harm, and it will do us collectively good. It proves that we really did lose the boat."

"You're an angel!"

And Luck, having now decided to take the lovers in hand, did the thing thoroughly well. They tucked the boat up in its little home by the edge of the lake and took the path up into the main road; and they had hardly reached the road before they heard behind them the sound of a quick-trotting horse.

"That's Vera!" exclaimed William. "Must be." The horse and cart swung round the corner into sight. "By Jove! it is! Hi, there! Tom!"

Vera was a fast mare belonging to the proprietor. William always maintained that the intelligent Swiss must have stolen her, on the grounds that the Swiss would never have bought so good an animal, and nobody would have been fool enough to give her to him.

The man pulled up, and William helped Isobel up into the cart. "You'll be home in a quarter of an hour," he said.

"But aren't you coming, too?"

"Too wet; I'll run for it. I shan't be long after you."

On his arrival he found that she had already established for him a serviceable reputation as a hero and a genius. As the utmost of his exploit was that he had swum a few yards in his clothes and recognised a horse, he felt that he had obtained the reputation at a very moderate cost.

The hotel dinner was over, but the intelligent Swiss, susceptible to the beauty of Isobel and the long purse of her father, did wonders. They dined well, under the

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"He waded the first part of the way."

admiring supervision of Isobel's family. The Swiss produced with an air of mystery a very special bottle. "No," he said to William, "zat is not on ze vine list. It is not filth, zat. I haf drunk him myself."

And Isobel explained to her mother that if you were in a railway collision, a colliery explosion, a shipwreck, and an earthquake simultaneously, you were quite all right so long as you had William with you. "If I'd been with anybody else, I should have been sitting on that darling little island without any dinner at this moment."

The length of the swim increased and multiplied exceedingly. By the end of dinner it was represented that William had swum half-way across the lake. She also proved that but for William, there would have been no cart to take her swiftly home from the lake. I do not know how she did this, because the cart would have overtaken her in any case, and even if she had not recognised the horse, the man Tom would certainly have recognised her and pulled up. So I do not know how she did it: but she did it, and with such enthusiasm as to convince all who heard her, with the solitary exception of William himself. He

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protested frequently and firmly, until he found that he was merely earning another reputation for excessive modesty. Then he gave up.

But it was pleasant to sun himself in his lady's favour once more.

IV.

LONG after Isobel had gone to bed, William sat in the hotel smoking-room, consuming many cigarettes and listening to the converse of an aged angler.

Now, the angler was a cynic, which is not wonderful. While the angler is not catching fish—that is, for by far the greater part of the time that he is trying to catch them—he has leisure for meditation, and his meditations are likely to take a bitter tone. But I do not know why all cynics are extremely liable to say things about women; there seems to be no reason for it.

The aged angler's principal opponent was the dyspeptic clergyman whom William and Isobel had dignified by the name of the Reverend Father. But to-night the Reverend Father had gone to bed early in a state of harassing doubt as to whether it had been wise of him to take a second helping of ice pudding. Consequently, the aged angler had room to spread himself, and he talked on the subject of women.

"You will never find in any woman," he cried dictatorially, "a really perfect sense of truth and justice. Even the best of them have not got it. The best woman in the world will blame her husband for what is really rank bad luck and not his fault in the very least. If the train in which they are travelling breaks down, and she has a few hours to wait, she always feels and acts as if her husband was in some way responsible."

"But then," said William, "she also praises and loves her husband for his good luck, for which also he is not responsible. One injustice cancels the other, and they both go out, and so no harm's done."

"You really think that?"

"Certainly."

"Then all I can say is that you have no proper sense of justice yourself."

"Very likely," said William. "And I'll bet you the want of it doesn't keep me awake at night. Good-night, everybody."

"Of course," said the aged angler, when William had gone, "we have to take into account that he's very much engaged to be married. Poor chap!"

THE SILENCE.

IN what far country shall I find you, dear,
Who waited at the end of every day
With comfort and with blessing, when the way
Was rough to climb, and weariness was near?
Will it be springtime or the waning year?
Morning or evening, golden skies or grey?
And oh! what word will be for me to say
To tell my heart out and out-brave my fear?

You will not answer, though I wait to know!
You give no sign, although I strain to see!
The frail Spring shadows throng, the white clouds pass,
The apple boughs shed drifts of petal'd snow—
Is it from some far heaven you call to me,
Or do you wait beneath this hillside grass?

ARTHUR KETCHUM.

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ODD CORNERS OF MUSICAL VIENNA.

By T. Boughton-Wilby.

THE eighteenth century had reached its zenith ere Vienna saw the dawn of that musical greatness whose memories were to be eternal. The first shafts of light broke upon the world when Christoph Willibald Gluck, reformer of the lyric drama, set foot in the gay Kaiserstadt for the second time in 1746. The twilight of that long, bright day of genius has almost been reached. Now that Brahms and Strauss are no more, it seems as if the last glimmer of the golden radiance behind the hills will ere long precede the final sunset of a glorious era. What is now left of the atmosphere of Gluck, and Weber, of Haydn, the divine Mozart, the majestic Beethoven?

The modern Vandal, the builder, has not

ARCHWAY THROUGH WHICH MARIE ANTOINETTE MUST OFTEN HAVE PASSED TO HER SINGING-MASTER, GLUCK.

left us overmuch of this Great Past. But far from the din and bustle of the beaten track sacred to Baedeker, we shall still come across quaint nooks and byways redolent of those historic days. I believe that most of them are unknown to the Viennese themselves—in fact, these memories of the great musicians who lived and died in the Austrian capital, replete as they are with the tragedy of life, are honoured by the Austrians in the breach and not the observance. I remember the present tenant of the room where Beethoven died telling me of her astonishment at two American ladies who, when they

HAYDN'S HOUSE, BOUGHT BY HIS WIFE'S WISH FOR HER WIDOWHOOD.

saw the historical corner, burst into tears. She could not understand their emotion!

What most saliently strikes one in "doing" the round of the great musicians' dwellings is the barren comfort in which they must have lived. They all lodged in flats and vegetated in narrow, dingy thoroughfares that had not even the attraction of mellowed, old-world associations. Musicians like Haydn composed and taught in musty attics, or sat out long convivial evenings in the fetid atmosphere of shabby old taverns, as did the modest, retiring Schubert. Beethoven alone—the irascible, sensitive, vitriolic Beethoven—sought his inspiration in the open fields, and upon the bosky mountain slopes. As they were born, so they as a rule died.

Let me describe one of these houses, as typical of the rest. A dull, grey coating of plaster gives a dingy, uninviting tone to the exterior. The entrance is through the doors

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BOOK KEPT BY HAYDN IN LONDON IN WHICH TO ENTER THE NAMES OF THE SUBSCRIBERS TO THE "CREATION." HIS PENCIL AND ITS CASE ARE ALSO SHOWN.

of a broad archway in the centre. Behind is the courtyard flanked by the smaller flats at the back. Here is also a small patch of green, and the common, evil-smelling stone staircase leading up to the open landings of the remaining storeys. Each house is distinguished by a name, sounding droll to our modern ears. There is Gluck's "Silver Lion," Mozart's "God's Eye," Schubert's "Red Hedgehog," Beethoven's "Black Spaniards." The ubiquitous porter, as distinct a type of Vienna as a coster-monger is of London life, tenants a few square feet at the bottom of the staircase, and lives in comparative opulence from the tips which are the tenants' form of compulsory gratitude for admittance after 10 p.m. On the ground floor is a small smoke-stained tavern, or a modest coffee-house, or it might be the unpretentious emporium of some haggling Jew. Sometimes courtyard succeeds courtyard in a veritable labyrinth. Beethoven died in a house where nearly a hundred families must now find shelter.

"Gluck's Wohnhaus," according to the tablet which now ornaments the front of the house where the singing-master of poor Marie Antoinette ended his days, was outside the old city ramparts. It is the centre of noise and bustle to-day, but it must have offered him many restful moments for his old age. The man who was reproached with having no melody occupied the flat on the first floor, which is now tenanted by a family which, if it has any veneration for the genius of Gluck, certainly objects to sharing it with any would-be visitor. Here, through this broad archway must have passed the hapless

ROOM IN WHICH HAYDN BREATHED HIS LAST.

HAYDN'S SPINNET, WHICH EMITS AT THE MOST, FAINT, TINKLING SOUNDS, PRESERVED IN VIENNA SIDE BY SIDE WITH HIS SKULL.

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MOZART'S FLAT IN VIENNA, WHERE HAYDN DECLARED HIM TO BE THE GREATEST COMPOSER HE KNEW.

Queen to her beloved master. Those were happy, joyous days of irresponsible maidenhood, ere the shadows of dreaded fate had begun to darken the threshold of her chequered life. What a world of history, to be sure, is this souvenir of Gluck!

Haydn drifted, like his gifted compeers, to Vienna in search of that fame and fortune which he was destined to win in the more congenial atmosphere of London. Poor Haydn! There are many odd corners sacred to his memory here, from that moment when the "weak, sweet voice" of the Imperial chorister had cracked, to become, as homely Maria Theresa put it, like the crowing of a cock. We can see him climbing the scaffolding of Schönbrunn Palace, and hear the motherly, matter-of-fact Empress directing the Court composer to give that "fair-haired blockhead a good thrashing." We can see him in a lofty attic of No. 10, Kohlmarkt, giving lessons on his spinnet for less that four shillings a month—think of it!—and then when comparative prosperity had come to him, marrying, like Mozart, the sister of his first love. She is a veritable Xantippe, a heartless nag and extravagant shrew. From Vienna she writes to the composer in London that she has found a house which would make an excellent dwelling for her as a widow, and begs him to send the money for its purchase!

This is the historical house now known as "Zum Haydn," or No. 19, Haydn Street. A

THE DESOLATE SPOT WHERE MOZART'S BODY IS SUPPOSED TO LIE.

MOZART'S PRIMITIVE CLAVIER, BEARING HIS WIDOW'S CERTIFICATE OF ITS GENUINENESS.

the time when Haydn purchased it and added a storey, it was remote from the madding crowd. The spreading city has long since caught up to it and destroyed every rural charm which it may then have possessed. Thanks to the irony of fate, Frau Haydn's wish was not to

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attain fulfilment. She was the first to succumb.

Haydn let the house out in flats and contented himself with two or three contemptibly little rooms at the back. Such parsimony, such ignoring of the common comforts of life, is almost unaccountable. Perhaps, however, he desired the restful influences of the garden and the distant hills. He was there from 1797 until his death in 1809. Here Mozart and Beethoven brought sunlight and shadow to him.

What a pathos surrounds the death of Haydn, to be sure! In the narrow compass of an insignificant room, now used as a Haydn museum, he must have lain while the screech of the French shells and the rumble of Napoleon's cannon struck terror into those around him. One of the French invaders has come just to shake hands with the illustrious man. The visitor's voice rings out with the magnificent tones of "In

ON THE SPOT WHERE THE DIVAN STANDS, SCHUBERT BREATHED HIS LAST.

IN THIS CORNER BEETHOVEN RAISED HIS FIST IN DEFIANCE OF THE THUNDER-PEALS AND FELL BACK DEAD.

Native Worth" and Haydn feebly expresses his thanks. We seem to see the dying man penning with a trembling hand:

> "Fled is my strength,
> Old and weak am I,"

for the opening bars of "Der Greis," and hear him sigh: "Ah! it is my last child, and not unlike me!" He counsels his attendants not to be afraid—"nothing can happen to you when I am nigh." His last wish is to be carried to the spinnet. An almost supernatural inspiration seizes him as the sonorous strains of the "Hymn to the Emperor" are heard. Three times he plays it. And then he is carried back. He is resigned, though he fain would finish the work scarce begun. Slowly he turns his head to the wall, and—the *finale* has been written.

One cannot recall the spoliation of Haydn's grave soon after his death, and the ruthless carrying off of his skull by a Vienna doctor, without thinking of the still more pathetic tragedy of Mozart's end. He was deserted at his grave, after being the butt of sorry intrigues during his life, and even posterity has failed to revive his memory as his genius deserved. Mozart occupied many houses in Vienna; all have disappeared save one, in Schuler Strasse, the Fleet Street of the Austrian capital. His flat on the first floor of this narrow house cost him a pretty sum, for those were his optimistic

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days, when the semi-dandy was in hopes of patronage and pupils, and had ended that existence of a beaten cur under the ægis of a brutal and arrogant prince of the Church. There is nothing so quaint in all Vienna, and the courtyard, more like the shaft of a factory chimney than anything else, is a curiosity. To stand in one of those rooms, however, is to recall most hallowed memories, for here it was that Haydn and Beethoven came, and here it was that after that concert of musical giants, Haydn, in an aside to Mozart's father, declared: "'Pon my honour, your son is the greatest composer I know."

We all know the story of his funeral, but none but those who have stood there on that spot, where, amid the bones of the forgotten and unknown of Vienna pauperdom, his sorrowing widow in vain searched for his remains, can imagine the utter desolation of the scene. Mozart's body had been thrown into some hole of St. Marx Cemetery, some distance outside the cemetery, with none but the gravediggers as witnesses, and a fortnight was sufficient to obliterate all traces of his whereabouts. Apparently the rude coffin bore no mark or sign by which

DESK AT WHICH BRAHMS WAS WONT TO STAND AND COMPOSE.

to identify it. Now, when scores of years have fled since the perpetration of that tragedy, long, rank grass mercifully mitigates the barren melancholy of the Pauper's Acre. We can still see traces, however, of the unceremonious way in which the bodies were thrown into their last resting-place. The gravediggers did not even trouble to level the ground, which is one vast stretch of undulating pitfalls for the unwary as far as the eye can reach, varied only by the thick undergrowth of shrub. A tiny bush surrounded by a protecting wire-work, a geometrically shaped stone stump, against

THE BED IN WHICH BRAHMS DIED.

Old-fashioned to the last, he used these two candles on the day of his death, even with the electric light in reach.

which leans a small slab with the almost illegible name of the composer scratched upon it, marks the vicinity where Mozart probably lies. Oh, the bitter irony of it all! Even some pauper woman's grave has been robbed to provide the slab!

Beethoven — deaf, irascible, sensitive Beethoven, the Doctor Swift of Austria, fulminating against the nobility, his friends, the object of caricature, endearing us to him by that redeeming, forgiving love for his worthless nephew—died as he had lived. He set very Death at defiance in the moment of dissolution. The last dwelling of the Republican who scratched out the name of Napoleon from the dedicatory title-page of his "Eroica," because he had become Emperor, is in the Schwarzspainer Street, a vast building formerly the monastery of the Black Spanish monks. His bedroom was at the back, and small—apparently too small for him to die in; so they removed him to a corner of the spacious *salon* facing the street and containing his piano. Here in this historical corner, close to the spot where his Broadwood instrument stood, Beethoven, terrible and aggressive to the last, raised his

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clenched fist in defiance of the thunder-peals which had roused him from his torpor, and fell back dead.

The room in which Franz Schubert was born—or rather *probably* born, for no one knows in which apartment of the house in Nussdorfer Street the composer of the "Erlkönig" first saw the light—has an air of sumptuousness, in spite of the comparative poverty against which schoolmaster Schubert had to struggle. Schubert landmarks, like those of Beethoven, abound in Vienna, though we have nothing left of the taverns where the bibulous Schubert used to sit with his boon companions—nothing of that quaint inn and popular resort near the Habsburg Church of the Capucines where Schubert gave the toast of "the next to follow Beethoven," with perhaps some intuitive inkling that he was drinking to himself. Schubert died in the Kettenbrücken Street, in a flat on the second floor, which must have been the very incarnation of cheerlessness. The entrance was through a sorry-looking kitchen, next to which was a dark, windowless room which received its light through the glass doors of the front room. It was probably Schubert's bedroom, but he died in the other chamber. Standing on this spot and recalling the end of the tenderest and most unassuming of souls, lovingly tended by his brother, thinking and dreaming to the last of the great one who had preceded him, it is indeed hard to tear oneself away and return to the noise and movement of the street again.

ROOM IN WHICH THE WALTZ KING DIED.

A CORNER OF THE WALTZ KING'S BILLIARD-ROOM.
Showing the famous card-table where he was wont to play with his boon companions.

Between Schubert and Brahms—what a gap! But yet Brahms, whom change of fortune never changed, who had but to stretch out his hand to grasp comparative luxury, led the same simple, unostentatious life as his immortal predecessors, beside whom his remains now lie in that Ring of the Immortals in the Central Cemetery. He and Strauss, the Waltz King, were boon companions—so alike and yet so different. For thirty years Brahms lived as a lodger in a cheerless house in Karls Street, and was blessed with more landladies than worldly goods. Strauss built himself a mansion and occupied it exclusively. Brahms composed at a simple standing desk which would not have fetched more than two shillings at an auction as the utmost of its intrinsic worth. Strauss had a composing desk of glittering elegance, illumined by the rays of an exquisite electric shade. He lived in lavish comfort, surrounded by friends, with his own billiard-room and magnificent reception-rooms. Brahms, loving association, stuck

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preferably to an old worthless chair for a music-stool. Strauss died in a bed of ebony inlaid with mother-of-pearl — in a *salon* rather than a bedroom. Brahms's death-bed was the usual German wooden, coffin-like affair, in a plain, unpretentious room. Old-fashioned to the last, he used two candles on the day of his death, even with the electric light in reach. There they all are as the gruff but kindly hearted Brahms left them—candles, piano, lamps, cigar-stumps, cigarettes, clothes, pens and pencils, even his coffee-cup. For though, like Strauss, he left the bulk of his fortune to the Muse from which he had derived it, his will was unsigned and in law is invalid. But if Brahms was a simple, honest soul, his friend, the Waltz King, was a real chip of that old, fast-fading Vienna whose proudest boast is its jovial good nature, its frank amiability, and its pure love of life's honest pleasures. He lived amid and loved luxury, but never seemed actually of it.

"THE RING OF THE IMMORTALS": SACRED TO BEETHOVEN, SCHUBERT, GLUCK, MOZART, SUPPÉ, STRAUSS, AND BRAHMS.

It may be that the souvenirs of the Great Ones of the past have only a fascination for the few. But the rest will ever consider them and their loving preservation as an unavoidable duty to posterity. As such, one cannot but regret that their keeping should be left to the city or country on which the obligation happens to fall. Circumstances, local conditions, or a blind indifference, often prevent the fulfilment of these obligations, and we and posterity are the sufferers.

Why, then, in view of that, should it not be feasible, if not advisable, to form some international society which could undertake the control of these things? It ought to be a labour of love for which mankind in general would be abidingly grateful.

WHITE BIRCHES.

MAIDENS that glimmer through the dusky wood,
Finger on lip, demure, alluring;
In silent loveliness, as when ye stood
On Latmos' side, and Pan, all sorrow curing,
Played sylvan airs on his sweet, mystic reed,
While little Dryads crept in fearful stealth
To give the strange, compelling music heed
That flooded all the glade with golden wealth.
Fair Vestal Virgins, so ye stand to-day;
But Pan is vanished with his pipe away!

ROSALIE ARTHUR.

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STRONG MAC.

By S. R. CROCKETT.*

SYNOPSIS OF FOREGOING CHAPTERS.—The story opened in the schoolhouse of Lowran, where a great noise was proceeding from the young men's bench. The Ploughing Match Day had been a holiday since the beginning of time; but Donald Gracie, the schoolmaster, had on this occasion denied the request of his scholars. The riot provoked the Dominie into striking the biggest youth in the school, Muckle Sandy, who retorted by knocking the schoolmaster down. Dora Gracie, the schoolmaster's daughter, with the aid of "Strong Mac," one of the bigger boys, proceeded to teach the school, after sending the Dominie to bed. The Dominie himself comes of distinguished stock, but has fallen on evil days through his fatal craving for drink. Strong Mac wins the "Single-handed" cup in the ploughing match, but in the hour of his success over Muckle Sandy remembers his promise to help Adora Gracie "keep school." The second instalment ended with the sudden alarm of Charlotte Webster, in love with Strong Mac, lest in her pique at his preference for Adora Gracie she had betrayed him as a poacher into the hands of the Laird's gamekeepers. The real fact, however, was that an incriminating pheasant in Mac's bag had been taken from his shoulders by a boyish devotee of Mac's, known as Daid the Deil, who was wounded by a shot from the keeper's gun, Strong Mac himself being released as blameless. The injury to the boy fired Sharon McCulloch, the father of Mac, a dour enemy of the great landlord from reasons of ancient wrong, to establish afresh a right of way "to kirk and market" through recently locked gates and barricades on the Laird's estate. Further developments showed the repulse of the Laird's attentions by Adora, and the revealing to the former that Strong Mac is probably his more favoured rival. The Laird's mother deprecates his admiration for a girl so far his inferior in rank.

CHAPTER XVII.

LOVE BY RESOLUTION.

WHEN Roy McCulloch tapped at the door of the schoolhouse of Lowran, the spinning-wheel had been pushed into its corner, and Adora Gracie, her temper somewhat restored by her victory over Sidney Latimer, was settling herself to the pleasantest part of the day's employments—the hour's quiet reading which preceded her ten-o'clock bed-time.

If the girl were indeed glad to see Strong Mac, the feeling certainly did not show on her face in the way of shyness or maidenly coyness.

"Roy McCulloch," she said sternly, as she looked at him, "had you nothing to keep you from raking the roads, that you must come here to spoil my one good hour?"

Roy smiled, but had too much judgment to say anything till he found himself being greeted by his old schoolmaster with Donald Gracie's invariable "Ah, lad! but I was thinking you had forgotten your old dominie!"

"Little fear of that, sir," said Strong Mac cheerfully. "You gave us too good cause to remember you each time we take a book into our hands."

"Well, here's a Virgil," cried Donald Gracie; "open it, and let us see if by any chance you can still construe a page."

This also was a request having the force of a command, repeated upon the occasion of every visit, and in anticipation of it Roy always prepared himself carefully for the ordeal.

To-night, however, he was not to be permitted to escape so easily as usual. Adora, who suspected his device, reached her hand across for the book.

"There is a passage in the Second Book I could not make out," she said. "Perhaps we might look at it, and Roy can tell us what he thinks is the proper rendering."

"Yes—yes, that is wise!" cried the old man, rubbing his hands gleefully. "Many men, many minds! Construe, Roy, construe!"

Strong Mac cast a reproachful glance at his tormentor, well knowing the reason of her sudden interest in Virgil; but he recovered himself in time to demand of Adora the details of her difficulty, which, when she had discovered and declared, he found to be also a stumbling-block of old standing to himself, and forthwith with great gravity referred the whole matter to the Dominie.

Donald Gracie took the book with a glow of pleasure in his eyes, and at once launched into a learned prelection, with much turning of leaves, quotation of parallel passages, and discussion of the niceties of language.

Adora sat by the window, her small head a little to the side, listening mischievously. She was perfectly conscious that Roy McCulloch was watching her. The young men who came to the schoolhouse seldom failed to do that.

The translation having been made out, and Adora's difficulty solved without seeming

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to interest that young lady very markedly, the Dominie continued to finish the book for his own pleasure; but by and by his voice subsided into inarticulate murmurs of satisfaction.

Then Roy McCulloch shyly crossed over and stood by the window in which Adora Gracie was seated. He would have drawn a chair near her, but, with a gesture of careless frankness, the girl made room for him on the window-seat.

"Well," she said, "and what have you come to tell me to-night—that you and your father have been committing manslaughter upon more of His Majesty's excisemen? We had Lieutenant Trant here the night before last, and he says he is bound to have you before long."

"Let him try. Lieutenant Trant is welcome," said Roy quietly. "There will be sticks a-breaking first—aye, and crowns too! They are growing overly forward, these preventive fellows. They will get hit over the fingers one of these days."

"Roy McCulloch," said the girl, dropping her voice, "when will you give up this foolishness? It will bring you into sore trouble one of these days."

"There is my father," Roy answered. "I must stand by him."

"But not in that," said Adora. "Surely there are other ways? Why not stick to the farm?"

"Because a man might just as well hang as starve," said Strong Mac gravely. "Our two or three poor hundred moorland acres could never keep my father and me in one meal a day. And a little free-trading, quietly gone about, gets us far less ill-will than overmuch meddling with the landlord's deer and muir-fowl."

"But I hear you are in the black books for that as well," retorted the girl. "There was a man here the other night who was as sore against you for that as was Trant the coastguardsman for the smuggling."

"The Laird of Lowran?" queried Roy sharply, with a sudden bend of his eyes upon the girl. But Adora met him with all her usual careless frankness of gaze.

"It is a secret of the confessional," she said.

"You will tell me," said Roy—"that is, if you wish me well. I will make no ill use of the information. You can trust me for that."

"Well, it was not Mr. Latimer—he always speaks well of you."

"His gamekeeper, then?"

Adora nodded very slightly.

"This is between us," she said. "I advise you to keep well within your own march-dykes for the next ten days. The hunt is afoot."

Roy McCulloch sat looking at the girl's busy fingers moving athwart her seam, as if the danger lay there.

"Thank you, Dora," he said. "I shall not forget."

"Take good heed, then," she went on. "Keep away from the Lowran and Bennan-brack forests, and give the enemy no handle against you."

"Is—the Laird in it?" said Roy measuredly.

"No, he knows nothing."

"You are sure?"

"If he had been, I should have known it," said Adora, simply stating a fact.

"I would rather have taken a year in gaol than have heard you say that," said Roy McCulloch, in a low voice.

Adora laid her work carefully by her side and looked the youth straight in the face. She was angry—far more angry than she had been with Sidney Latimer.

"Are all men fools?" she said, in her clear decided tones. "Already to-night I have had to ask one of them to bide from my father's house. Must I do the same for you? No," she added, after a pause; "we have been friends over long for that, you and I, Roy. Come, take your cap. I will walk to the gate with you. I have something to say that had better be said out of doors. Bid my father good-night."

Roy rose obediently. The Dominie extended a limp perfunctory hand. He was still deep in his Virgil.

"Good-night," he said; "come back soon, and we will have another grand page. Listen to this. I have just come upon it."

"No, no, not to-night," put in his daughter hastily; "you must not keep Roy. I am turning him out. Do not move till I come back. I am going to the gate to see that he really closes it. It makes a noise if it is not properly shut."

They went out together into the cool summer gloaming. It was already dusk under the schoolhouse pines. The village lay beneath them, smokeless and clear, its whitewashed houses and green-slated roofs following the irregular line of the road on either side. There was a far-away cheerful crying of children late at their play—silence otherwise complete and cool, like the first wash of a still sea.

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"And now," said Adora Gracie, laying her hand upon the young man's arm with the easy accommodation of fearless country nineteen, "listen. I will tell you what I would not trouble to explain to anyone else. I would be as ready to be Sidney Latimer's friend as yours—that is, if he were not Laird of Lowran. But I will not be talked about—at least, not if I can help it. I care no more for you than for him, except that I have known you longer. He has as little right to find fault with me for being your friend as you have to quarrel with me because he comes to the house; and that is, understand clearly, no right at all. If you are to be my friend, keep a guard on that tongue of yours, Roy, my lad. Whenever I am unable to manage my own affairs, I will tell you. And now, good-night. Shut the school gate behind you, and if you wish to please me, keep off the hill of Bennanbrack for the next fortnight."

As Roy McCulloch went homeward in the grey-purple dusk of the moorland night, he had matter for meditation. He was so perfectly familiar with the way that as he went he could think without interruption. Every tuft of orange-coloured bent, every springy bush of dark heather, came up under his foot exactly in the place where his foot had expected it. He avoided the dangerous places, the green-scummed "well-eyes," the bottomless bogs, the precipitous "screes," with a perfection of knowledge which equalled the instinct of an animal.

There are occasions in the life of every young man when he seems to himself to see and resolve with extraordinary clearness. The world of circumstance, compelling and impelling, has not yet closed about him. Instead of many purposes, he has but one, and generally that one is connected with a woman. If not, according to his weird, he becomes a great commander-in-chief of armies, or dies on the scaffold.

So Strong Mac reflected—and the reflection appeared to him original and unprecedented in the history of the world—that, without Adora to share it with him, life would be but a vain dream. At Strong Mac's age, youth is prematurely apt to renounce the world because it cannot have the Sole Adorable of the moment, but the mood seldom lasts out the year.

But Roy had really something to say for himself—or so, at least, he thought.

"Who has half so much right to her as I?" he meditated. "Ever since I can remember I have thought of her first in the morning, last at night. At school I did not learn my lessons because I wanted to learn, but to please Adora Gracie."

And these things actually seemed to him as having something to do with the case.

Then it struck Strong Mac that he lacked some of the signs of passion as depicted in the rare romances he had read. For there were some old novels of the eighteenth century at House of Muir, besides his father's fly-books and his intricate accountings with the Isle of Man traders. But then Adora Gracie was in no way a heroine according to rule. He smiled to himself at the idea.

A young man who ventured to address her in the language of foolish compliment might, according to his status and Adora's humour, receive a stinging reproof or a box on the ear; but love—— Roy smiled again.

The girls in the books blushed, trembled, quavered. They could not say "Bo!" to a goose, lest the monosyllable should be thought unmaidenly. But Adora Gracie was in no wise thus sicklied over with sentiment. Clear-eyed, plain of speech, definite in action, chalk was not more easily distinguishable from cheese than Adora Gracie from all other daughters of man. Witness—Roy McCulloch.

"*What, then, can I do to please Adora Gracie?*"

That was the question he proposed to himself as he went homeward over the moor. He had offended her that night, he knew, but the like should not occur again. In the future he would leave his own feelings altogether out of account. He would study solely how to deserve her friendship.

True, he excelled in all the sports of the countryside. He was so incontestably first at quoits, at throwing the hammer, at wrestling, leaping, and running, that no one could be found to enter the lists against him. Well, all that must have an end. Adora scorned mere triumphs of bodily strength and skill. Roy was sure she did. On the other hand, she loved books. He was not clever, he said to himself, but he would learn. His brother James in Drumfern would send him as many books as he could induce his father to buy. These he would read and discuss with Adora Gracie. Mind would first speak to mind, and afterwards (he knew no better) heart would respond to heart.

In the second place, and furthermore, he would watch for opportunities of being useful to her.

Roy was compelled to think this second

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point over carefully. Adora was such a difficult person to help—not at all like the girls of the story-books. These were always so conveniently ready to faint at the sight of a cow in a lane or a bull in a pasture. Adora would have lifted the nearest cudgel, or snatched up a stone from the dry dyke. Still more probably, she would simply have flapped her white apron and said "Shoo!" She never needed to be helped over stiles or delivered from perilous straits. Crags and morasses had been her playgrounds, and she could spring from tuft to tuft across the most treacherous "quakkin'-qua" as well as Strong Mac himself. It was certainly discouraging.

Still, he had a glimpse of one or two things—possibilities far off and vague indeed, yet not quite hopeless.

For one thing, the Dominie's demon was not dead. At any moment it might awake from slumber. Well, Donald Gracie liked him; he was sure of that. He would go and talk to his old schoolmaster in the evenings; they would read Latin together, and he would see Adora.

Then he remembered that among the pines at the back of the schoolhouse, in a very approachable situation for a benevolent brownie, stood the Dominie's little official wood-pile and peat-stack. The bairns brought the peat as part payment for their fees. Roy promised himself that Adora should find these, like the widow's cruse, continually plenished and inexhaustible. But he did not think what he would say when a certain very clear-headed person asked him to explain the belated miracle.

One other last resolution, for Roy was nearing home. As to what she had asked of him that night, he would do her bidding to the letter. So far as he could, he would stop smuggling and for a time confine himself to the work of the little croft. It was a sacrifice, certainly, for in his heart the young man did not believe that anyone could possibly entrap him or do him any serious injury. He had that confidence in himself which a man has who has never yet felt himself helpless in the grip of Fate.

Reasoning thus on what is entirely outside of reason, Roy reached this remarkable conclusion:—

Resolved,—That *the way to produce love in a woman's heart is to avoid all mention of the subject when talking to her, to compass her about with unseen anonymous services, and, above all—to cultivate the mind!*

ROY MCCULLOCH.

It was a remarkable advance. Love, thus arranged for, would be no longer blind. He would become a reasonable, cultivated, intelligible divinity, who, with other childish things, had laid aside his bow, his quiver, and his habit of playfully transfixing people's hearts with toy arrows. But Strong Mac, thus making a wager with Fate, did not know that, if this were indeed the case, the whole world (including Adora Gracie) would at once go into mourning for their old, impish, tricksy, improvident, spiteful, blissfully teasing boy-god, the son of Venus, who, dying a thousand deaths, reborn a thousand times, never once grows old or abdicates his right to reign.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BATTLE ENGAGES.

BUT the tale of the suitors of Penelope is far from ended.

Not only did Jock Fairies of the Holm attend at the schoolhouse every Saturday night, for the pleasure of sitting on the extremest edge of a chair and looking at the fireplace, but as he went out at the gate he put a certain question in form to his young hostess. For Adora generally accompanied him to point out the way, ever since the night when, mistaking the back door for the front, he had walked over the block upon which the kindling-wood was chopped, and barely escaped braining himself on the broad-axe.

Jock Fairies the young man was very much what might have been expected from Jock Fairies the boy after three years' growth. That is, he was big, kindly, a little stupid, easily led for good or ill, and—and, as of old, completely subordinate to the stronger nature in presence of which he found himself—whether that happened to be Adora Gracie, Strong Mac, or—Sandy Ewan.

Ah, Sandy Ewan! That was the name of the last and most dangerous of Adora's suitors. Entering into his heritage upon the death of his father, at an age when most youths are yet wholly in leading-strings, Alexander Ewan's hard, vehement, and passionate nature, naturally arrogant and impatient of obstacles, had so carried him away that his wild exploits, his amorous adventures, his reputed dealing with the Kirk Session of his own parish, had made his name a byword over half Galloway. And this feeling was deepened by a certain dark vein of cruelty, of which strange tales came to be whispered.

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"'And now,' said Adora Gracie, . . . 'listen.'"

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Young Ewan's father had died rich—that is, for the time and place. And so, at twenty-one, those were his own acres that Sandy Ewan strode upon. His own sheep trampled the many paths of his muirs. His own cattle studded a thousand hillsides, and above all, his own stallions snorted and whinnied and pranced along the roads of Galloway and the Upper Ward. For, with all his forceful brutality, Sandy Ewan carried on his shoulders no empty head. Lavishly generous where his pleasures or desires were concerned, in matters of business he proved to the full as hard-headed as his father. He had early seen the riches which would accrue to him who should improve the poor-blooded, inbred, "fushionless" work-horses of the south of Scotland. And to this end he imported Flanders mares and English stallions, and so in a brief space blossomed out as the dictator of market-places and a chief arbiter of horse-shows.

On a keen snell-blowing February morning, Sandy Ewan, laird of the Boreland of Kirkanders, as well as of several surrounding farms, strode out across the short spongy turf of the "ley" fields near the house of Boreland, to visit his sheep. He had shepherds whose duty it was to do this for him, but Sandy Ewan believed in personal supervision, and, besides, he had rested ill in his bed that night.

His strong, bleak, unkindly horse-face had the protruding underlip more than usually thrust out, and was full of the dour angers of the man seldom thwarted. His dull eyes were injected, but, though it was above all things a time of hard drinking, on this occasion Sandy Ewan had not tarried long at the wine-cup. He dug his iron-shod heel deep into the sod as he walked. Malice fierce and bitter had him by the throat. He muttered to himself as he went.

"She denies me, and I know the cause. The reason, indeed, is plain. It is the poacher's son, Roy McCulloch, who smuggles his drink and lives on the deer killed on other folk's lands. And for such a beggar and a thief she gives *me* the back of her hand. I did not mean to—no, what is she better than the others? But her light scorns drove me as with a whip. And I offered her all this——"

He looked behind him at the spick-and-span new mansion-house of Boreland, which it had been the last act of his father's life to build, at the far-extending rectangle of barns and byres—his own addition—at the scarcely finished stables, and the parks where his breeding stud was exercising.

With a gesture indicating the hopelessness of understanding any woman born of woman, he repeated incredulously: "She refused all this—the first living woman that ever had the chance of it!"

Then he glanced down his full height of six foot and two inches, took in his well-legginged calves, his well-shod feet, stroked his long clean-shaven upper lip, and added, in a yet more disgusted tone: "*And she refused ME!*"

It was inconceivable, knowing what he knew of women. Muckle Sandy smiled a little self-satisfied smile as he thought of his record.

"Ah!" he murmured, nodding his head. "'some hae meat an' canna eat, an' some wad eat that want it!' Bonny lady ower yonder, have a care—ye will maybe see your pride get an unco downcome. As for your poacher's son——"

As he thought of Roy McCulloch, words failed him, and he fell back on the brute silence of sullen wrath. He frowned so that the heavy hairless folds of skin which represented eyebrows accentuated the cruelty of his small stubborn eyes. Then his mind reverted to his repulse of the previous night.

"Mony is the lass," he said aloud, in the country speech which at that time all used upon need, "that had hae been weel content wi' the man without the doonsitting—aye, Elspeth Gibb up at the Gowanriggs, an' Bonny Betty o' the Ferry, to gang nae farther! I hae seen them baith greetin'—and for what? Juist fleechin' and prayin' on me that I wadna leave them a'thegither! But what yin o' them a' ever had the chance to be mistress o' the Boreland o' Kirkanders—a laird's wife, sitting by my side in the kirk, and riding to the market on her ain Kelso naigie? But I'll wager I'll be evens wi' the besom some day yet, or my name is no Sandy Ewan!"

From this it will be easily understood that it was no good day for Sandy Ewan and Roy McCulloch to encounter each the other. Yet it was their fate to meet. It came to pass at the smithy of Ebie Cargen, the village antiquary and political dictator of the parish. Ebie could tell every old wife's tale that had been handed down concerning house, tree, cave, or lonely mountain. He knew on what night the mystic Grey Lady of Glenlee perambulated the avenue. He knew the dread secret she was seeking vainly to communicate.

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On unusually crowded evenings, when he had cooled his thirst a little more frequently than usual, the smith would relate the famous tale of his meeting with the spectre in the Holm Wood, and how her hand, when it touched his, was "as bonny an' weel-roonded as that o' Charlotte Webster hersel'!"

"Quaite—quaite, smith," muttered Robin Sheil of the Newlands on this occasion. "Here's Strong Mac doon frae the Muir's wi' a job for ye. An' ye had better no even Chairlie Webster wi' the Dominie's lass in his hearin'!"

And indeed, as he spoke, Strong Mac appeared at the turn of the road by the saw-mill, leading the well-known old white pony. He walked silently and very lightly upon his feet, as is the wont of strong men. The assembled company in the "smiddy" (some six or eight of the choicest spirits in the village) regarded the young smuggler and stalker of other folk's deer with more than the usual admiration due to successful law-breakers.

"He's a bauld upstanding lad and a credit to the pairish," said Paton of Egarton sententiously.

"That's mair nor the lairds wad allow, I'm thinkin'," retorted the smith drily.

The habitual frequenters of the smithy looked towards the smith to see if he had a reason personal to Strong Mac for his unusual consideration for those in high place. But the man of iron only passed his hand across his brow, and threw the drops of professional sweat from him with a flip of the fingers. Then he wiped his damp hand on his leathern apron and greeted Roy pleasantly enough.

"Aye, lad, and how's a' wi' ye up at the House o' Muir?"

Roy responded with cordiality, nodded about the smithy, and, whistling the while, proceeded to fasten his white pony to a ring in the shoeing-shed attached to the smithy.

Then he sat down on a convenient ledge at some distance behind the fire, in a place where the wrinkled mass of the bellows, dimly seen suspended above the red fire glow, loomed like a huge animal a-swing in some magician's chamber. In the parliament of "Lallan" ploughmen waiting for their "culters" to be set, their "swingle-trees" to be "clepped" or "banded," the young hillman sat modestly apart like a stranger. He was, indeed, thinking of Adora Gracie and the partial embargo she had laid upon him. Still, she was without doubt interested in him, or she would never have been so anxious for his safety. So much, at least, was good.

Roy was aroused from his reverie by the sound of an entrance into the little court-yard of the smithy. A loud voice hailed the smith by name, and Ebie Cargen went to the door to answer.

It was dark by this time, and the smith, in a voice as rough and loud, demanded who called his name.

"Come out here, smith!" cried the voice again.

"Come ye ben here, gin ye want ocht wi' Ebie Cargen," said the smith, and forthwith betook him back to his anvil.

"Ebie," whispered one of the village hangers-on, "do as he bids ye. It's the young laird frae Kirkanders."

"Guid be wi' us! and wha micht he be?"

"Maister Ewan—ye surely ken—young Maister Alexander frae the Boreland," said the sycophant, hoping that the person designated would note his service.

"D'ye mean Muckle Sandy—Sly Tod Ewan's lang loon?" cried the smith in a loud voice. "If he wants Ebie Cargen, he can come and seek him. He kens the smiddy door."

It was with a curious undercurrent of silent dislike, mingled with the inevitable half respect, half fear inspired by a man with the reputation for money or "regardlessness," that the little "smiddy parliament" moved to receive Sandy Ewan. Everyone present, with two exceptions, made some slight alteration of position, indicating uneasiness or a desire to get away unobserved. The two exceptions were the smith at his forge and Strong Mac seated deep in the dusk, hidden, or almost hidden, from any incomer by the red glow of the hearth fire and the black mass of the bellows.

With his hand masterfully upon the bellows' pole, Ebie the smith sent forth at times a gentle moaning and anon a sonorous roar, according to the exigencies of Vulcan or the condition, disturbed or peaceful, of the smithy parliament.

"Well, lads," cried Sandy Ewan, with a certain condescension in his voice befitting his new condition of laird—instantly detected and resented by every man within hearing—"how is a' wi' ye the nicht? A full meeting, I see—eh, lads? The plough-irons have surely been knockin' their brains oot against a heap o' stanes this day!"

No man answered, because no man had been directly addressed. There was an

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uneasy fretting silence, broken only by the leathery wheeze of the bellows and the smith's "Noo, Jock!" as he signalled his assistant and striker.

Then, comfortable to all, there arose the merry alternate dong-ding, dong-a-ding of the fore-hammer and its mate. A score of eyes watched the sparks fly, first white, anon red; then the ruddy sunset colour died out of the smitten iron, a dullish purple invaded it, till the mass grew too cold to be handled, when, with an "Ouff!" of satisfaction, the smith replunged the metal into the fire, bent upon the handle, and, with the first hissing breath of the bellows, turned to the newcomer with a grim humour on his face, dried by thirty years of fire-stoking and bellows-blowing.

"And what micht be your Honour's will wi' Ebie Cargen the nicht?" he said.

The irony of the title was lost on Sandy Ewan, who at the time was so conscious of his own dignity as a laird and officer of Militia that if one had saluted him as "General" or "My Lord" he might have been a little surprised, but assuredly he would never have thought of correcting them.

Now, Sandy Ewan desired to be popular, and did his best to be friendly and hearty, thereby, as a natural consequence, depressing the spirits of his listeners to the lowest pitch. Only a solitary voice answered his sallies—that of the sycophant who had urged the smith to go out to meet him. This was one Jeems Easton by name, a long-haired sleek-faced man, who was of no consideration in Lowran because he was suspected of buying oil for his hair, instead of using the domestic candle for the purposes of the Sunday toilet. Jeems obsequiously nodded his sleek head and sedulously responded in the best English fashion judged proper in speaking to a man of note.

"Aye, laird, I was just thinkin'——" he had begun, when the smith imperiously cut him short.

"If I mistak not, Maister Ewan hasna yet informed us in what way we can be o' service to him."

For the smith, when very angry or very contemptuous, could be elaborately polite. In the smithy it was counted one of the surest of danger-signals.

Sandy Ewan, however, never doubting the cordiality of his reception, stamped his way up to the hearth, pulling off his great riding-gloves as he went, and holding up his fingers to the blaze.

"There are some padlock-chains badly wanted up at the Nether Airie," he said at last. "We have been losing overly many sheep to please my grieve. There are some folk up near the head-end o' Lowran pairish that hae a difficulty in kennin' their ain sheep frae ither folk's!"

This pointed straight at the McCullochs of House of Muir, whose ground "marched" with that of the Nether Airie, a large "led" farm which, among his other ventures, Sandy Ewan had recently leased from the Laird of Bennanbrack. Sandy Ewan expected a laugh, or at least a chuckle of appreciation, but on this occasion none came, even from sycophant Easton. An unquiet silence oppressed the smiddy, whispers and nudgings passed here and there, in the midst of which the smith grunted audibly and blew up the fire with more than his usual vehemence.

Strong Mac sat motionless, his eyes seemingly intent on a dull ruddy patch on the black floor of trodden forge-ashes, on which the red snout of a ploughshare was slowly cooling. No one had courage to inform Sandy Ewan of his presence.

"Jock," said the smith, "will ye attend to your business? There's a score o' padlock-cheens ahint the dass (dais) that were ordered when the Lairds were set on stoppin' the road to the Hoose o' Muir. No yin o' them was ever needed. They micht serve Maister Ewan for his Nether Airie yetts."

Jeems Easton the sycophant interposed to break the force of the smith's irony.

"Lord—Lord!" he cried, "an' ye hae been losin' your sheep! The country's surely in an awsome state when vaigabonds are allowed to gang aboot the country robbin' honest folk!"

"To my thinkin' the worst ill-doers are not those who gang through the country, Easton, but those that are permitted to stop in it. There's them no that far away that will maybe swing in a lang tow the next time the Red Judges come to Dumfries!"

The sycophant, conscious of the lazy figure sitting so darkly behind the bellows-sweep, tried to convey a warning to his principal.

"There's them that it's maybe no canny to name, Laird Boreland," he said, striving by turn of head and inclination of elbow to draw attention to the locality of the danger.

But Sandy Ewan, conscious of his strength and proud of his position, a little elevated, too, by the refreshments he had partaken of at the various public-houses on his way, raised his voice, and would have none of his warnings or reproofs.

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"'Liar!'"

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"Name?" he cried, "name? What care I for the names o' a' the blackguards in Scotland? I come here direct from the Sheriff at St. Cuthbertstown, and I can tell ye that the names of the sheep-stealers will ring in a day or twa through a' Galloway! The Fiscal himsel' is hard on their trail; and listen to this, lads—there's a gye gleg lad that will soon find something else to do wi' his forenichts than to make a fool o' the light-headed dochter o' a drucken schoolmaster!"

There was a gasp of horror-stricken awe throughout the smithy. A short pregnant silence, then out of the gloom Strong Mac detached himself. Marching up to Sandy Ewan, he stood the space of two breaths looking into his eyes to give him time to defend himself. Then with the single word "Liar!" at one blow he sent the evil-speaker flying through the open door of the smithy into the darkness of the night.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SUB-SOIL OF CRIME.

THUS in Lowran was war declared—swift, sudden, to the death. On Strong Mac's side there was not only natural resentment for false accusations, not only the Anger because of the Woman (like to which there is none other on the earth), but also a slow accumulation of mislikings and grievances, the natural animosity of years, begun in schooldays, continued in youth, and now to be fought to a finish with all the strength of manhood.

On Sandy Ewan's part jealousy and rivalry had grown to acute hatred. He was of those who cannot bear to lose. Strong Mac had thrashed him at school. Ewan had carried through life the consciousness that but for this boy he might have been without a rival. The expulsion from the schoolhouse, the ploughing match, the ill-divided favours of Adora Gracie—above all, a deep, dour, dogged determination to stamp out an adversary once for all, so that he might never again lift up his head—formed in Sandy Ewan's bosom the very soil from which great crimes spring full-grown in a night.

Yes, it was to be fought to a finish. Both of the young men recognised that. And they knew in their hearts (or thought they knew) that whatever the ostensible cause of their quarrel, the victor's prize was to be Adora Gracie. Still, it might have been as well to consult the lady, who in any case was exceedingly likely to have a mind of her own on the matter.

After the scene of the Lowran smiddy, Sandy Ewan was assisted, bruised of countenance and much confused in understanding, upon his beast, and rode home, compassed by the ill-rewarded attentions of the sycophant, at whom he swore continuously.

As he went, his hatred returned doubly upon him. A sense of disgrace gnawed at his heart, and not all the consoling reflections of Jeems Easton, timidly faithful, could draw a word of acknowledgment from him. He would be revenged on his adversary, and that speedily. Fierce thoughts flitted through his mind. Oh! if he only had him down and helpless, what pleasure there would be in trampling out his life with his boot-heels! There were, even in Scotland and in the year of grace 1812, ruffians to be hired, escapes from the gaols, deserters from the Army. Crob McRobb—the outcast—rose up before him. He would help him, the dark man with the face like a weasel, *who for a guinea would*—so, at least, they said—and Sandy Ewan had many guineas.

Then through the blind savagery which pain and shame bring to the surface in better men than Muckle Sandy, the dour staunch brain of his race began to work. After all, were there not other and safer ways? To stamp a man's life out may, upon occasion, entail unpleasant consequences.

There was the unfinished business of the sheep-stealing. He regretted that he had boasted of it. The enemy would now be on his guard. But, again, there was the weasel-faced man, a dark, lithe, light-running, elusive, underground weasel who would be at his disposition—for a price. Crob McRobb was his name.

So by the time that Sandy Ewan had reached the Boreland of Kirkanders a plan had begun to take shape in his mind. After all, he would make good his boast. If Roy McCulloch and his father did not hang by the neck till they were dead (as he hoped), at least he would see to it that they were compelled to quit the country for good and all.

With these thoughts in his head, Sandy Ewan brewed himself a bumper of brandy-and-water, long and strong. Then he tumbled into bed, resolved to send a message to the Man of the Weasel Face in the morning. But on waking, the extra brandy he had swallowed, together with the consequences of Strong Mac's blow, had made him unpresentable. A violent headache, a nausea

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mingled of bitter shame and physical pain kept his thoughts at home, and it was evening before he had sufficiently recovered to begin definitely to plan his revenge.

Then he sent for Crob McRobb. It was his foreman, Grieve Cormack, who carried the message—carried it, too, with many inward questionings as to what his master could have to say to such a world's reprobate as Crob. He wished it had been written in a letter. He would willingly have read it for illiterate Crob.

"Some deeviltry aboot a woman, I'll wager!" was his guess—with, after all, a far-away rightness about it. For Adora Gracie was at least one of the causes of Muckle Sandy's present evil case.

Meantime, in a little den off the business-room of the new house of Boreland, Sandy Ewan lay couched, grumbling low to himself in the semi-dark like a tiger with a broken head, ill to approach, worse to disobey.

When the silent-footed old woman with the face like oiled bone, who had been his nurse in childhood, brought him some light refreshment, she did so quite prepared to have it thrown at her head, plate and all. Devilled bones were what Sandy's stomach craved after. These and vengeance—also bedevilled by all the brood of the pit.

Thus had the man lain for nearly twenty-four hours, the sickness of physical pain slowly submerging itself beneath the rising tide of hatred and resolve. From where he lay he could in his turnings see into the wide barely furnished room which he called his library. The back of a book on the Criminal Law of Scotland, which, very superfluously, he had bought upon his elevation to the bench of justices of the peace for the county, looked at him with a warning air. It seemed to swing suggestively to and fro upon the table when he thought of the pleasure of slaying his enemy slowly. They said that sometimes it took half an hour for a man to die on the gallows. That was a long time, and with a curse, Sandy Ewan turned over, that he might not see the big three volumes of "Stair's Institutes" which flanked the official inkstand.

It was in the deep heart of the night when Crob McRobb arrived at the Boreland. He had been hard to find, being, as usual, absent on business of his own. But his son Daid had succeeded after Grieve Cormack had signally failed. The weasel-faced man entered the great house warily, treading lightly as if he suspected traps on the floor, perhaps lurking open-jawed under the soft unaccustomed carpets, or as it might be, a spring gun looking out at him from under the hanging corners of a table-cover.

But when Crob stepped into the wide bare spaces of the "library" and heard Muckle Sandy swear at him, he became at once much more assured. That, at least, was something he understood and had been prepared for. It assured him of a welcome. Crob had set his feet on carpets before, and knew the way up some great folk's staircases as well as themselves; but that was in the silence and blackness of night, when no friendly oaths cheered his larcenous way.

At the door he inquired in a husky voice after the patient's health, and in reply received the information that it was evil to a degree inexpressible on any printed page; furthermore, that it was nothing the better for seeing him; and that, in especial, Grieve Cormack was a useless good-for-nothing numskull, of no character, and worse than no parentage—inasmuch as he had been so long in doing his bidding. And what did he, Crob, mean by coming to his house when all decent folk were in their beds?"

"Doubtless that was the reason Crob wasna in his!" commented the Grieve humorously.

Whereupon his amiable master cursed him anew, but Crob, who understood the injury only vaguely, bore no malice.

"And get out of my sight!" cried the patient ungratefully to his grieve. "Leave the lamp burning in the library; and tell that auld besom Jess Laybroad that if she dares so much as to set her head within the door, I'll gie her an ounce o' lead drops about her lugs! I'll hae nae spyin' and key-hole-hearkenin' in my house!"

* * * * *

What passed between these two so different men long remained a secret. Even now some part of their converse has never had the light cast upon it. But events occurring, some of them long afterwards, help us to judge of the probable purport of the interview.

The two men were types of the different races which share Galloway unequally between them. Sandy Ewan was as clearly of the conquering caste as Crob McRobb was of the conquered. Muckle Sandy Ewan was Anglo-Saxon—or what word soever better expresses that colonising, steadily annexing strain which came forth out of the North German marshes, poured northward through England, and in Dumfries and Galloway became crossed with Scandinavian

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dourness. Gone awry as in Sandy's case, the product of all this is apt to become aggressive, incurious of the rights of others, holding for all moral law and gospel a certain fear of consequences and cautious respect for a whole skin, this blonde horse-faced Galloway type makes, when aroused, a very dangerous and highly unscrupulous enemy.

Altogether different was Crob McRobb. Dark, slight, sharp-featured, eyebrows meeting in a thick bar over small quick-twinkling eyes, the eyes of an animal—adroit with finger and brain, by nature perfectly lazy, perfectly unscrupulous, perfectly a liar, ever suspicious and on the defensive, grateful for favours, indeed, like a stray dog, but with a much longer memory for injuries, in nowise restrained by any fear of consequences whatsoever, flashing out into sudden angers, and striking through a red mist—Crob was in essence the old Pict—the displaced, the downtrodden, the despoiled, who for all defence has conserved the serpent tooth and poison bag, together with the readiness to fasten on the throat of a victorious enemy.

Almost till morning endured this pregnant conference of Scot and Pict. Indeed, the February dawn was already breaking chill and grey over the Solway strip when the glittering-eyed Pict glided out, silent as a shadow, stepping carefully over the slumbering form of Grieve Cormack—who had stretched himself outside the library wrapped in his plaid, but who, fatigued with listening, had fallen asleep with his head against the jamb of the door.

Within, his master lay long awake, plotting and replotting as is the manner of his kind. He had found his instrument. Out on the face of the fields towards Lowran, a certain light-footed stooping shadow laid a hand on dykes and five-barred gates, going over them like a bird, or diving into plantations noiseless and insubstantial as a drift of peat-reek. At last, having arrived at one of his many caches, Crob McRobb stopped to rub his palms together. His head was sunk to the ears between his shoulders, out of the way of the February frost. The Pict smiled. He had found a job to his liking.

CHAPTER XX.

AN OLD MAID'S TEA-PARTY.

SINISTER rumours ran like sheet-lightning athwart the countryside, but there were two persons whose ears they did not reach. Bound by his promise, Roy McCulloch kept within the bounds of his little muircroft, while to and fro about the school in the fir plantation Adora Gracie did her own work and her father's, recking nothing of dark fell Pict or blonde plotting Saxon.

Now, in spite of the war (or because of it), things went very well with most Galloway farmers in the Dear Years. All manner of produce fetched double the ordinary prices, and there was yet no thought of the terrible reckoning which was to come when the ports should open, and when, autumn after autumn, worse harvest followed bad over all Scotland. Meantime there was much entertaining and infinite heartsome congress in the villages and among the farm-towns. The poor help the poor in their poverty, but there is no doubt that the ingle lowes the brighter, the pot bubbles more gratefully, the board is spread more kindly, when the peat-shed is piled high with purple-brown peats, when the hams hang from the ceiling, and the meal-ark spills over on the floor each time the guidwife thrusts her wooden scaup therein.

During the winter there had been many gatherings (they were not yet called "parties") in Lowran and the neighbouring valleys. To these Roy McCulloch went when invited—at least, when there was a reasonable probability of Adora being there.

Now, at the end of the little loan which led to the Gairie farm, a mile and a half from Lowran, dwelt a certain Aline McQuhirr. Her younger brother held the lease of the excellent arable acres of Gairie, and also of the Gairie hill, a sudden-rising purple-black ridge of heather and bent (locally known as the Four Nines, because it was believed to contain 9999 acres), the finest of all possible pasture for black-faced sheep. Aline McQuhirr was the gentlest old maid ever seen. For many years she had been housekeeper to her brother Adam, till one day he had taken it into his head that he would get married. It was felt on all hands to be a somewhat precipitate affair, in so far as the engagement was of no more than twenty-four years' standing. But something must be forgiven to the impetuosity of lovers. So they were married—this leisurely Adam and his not-impatient Eve.

But in their Paradise they did not forget the gentle Aline. In time Adam installed her in the quaint little cot-house by the white loaning-yett of the Gairie, which presently she converted into a place of blanched window curtains and sweet-scented

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"At the door he inquired in a husky voice after the patient's health."

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flowers. The earliest potatoes (always ready for the middle Thursday in July, being the Fast Day preceding the parish communion) made a patchwork, dusky purple and green, in her back-yard. The cunningest jams and jellies dwelt of habit and repute in her corner cupboard. None could confect a "lippie" of shortbread with Aline McQuhirr. And really, unless she asked you to one of her evening parties—well, you did not know what a party was.

And, indeed, there were not so many in the parish who did know. For with all that gentle face (in which, though her hair was silver, youth and love and sweetness abode never a whit the worse for wear), Aline McQuhirr was "verra particular." Not everyone pleased her. No red-faced jovial farmers cried in on market-nights as they did at her brother's house up the loaning. No toddy reeked in Aline's ben room; but for the favoured there was a dish of tea—of which she never told the cost per pound. That was, without irreverence, between her and her Maker. Aline knew it was far more than she ought to have afforded; but she could not deny herself the pleasure of having the best tea and the repute of the daintiest tea-table in Lowran. It was her sole extravagance; and with such gentle ways and a heart that counted the price of half-a-pound of Souchong a sin to be prayed over and repented of, how was it that Aline McQuhirr had never been married?

That also she kept to herself. But Adora knew. There were not many who could long keep anything from Adora Gracie. So it came about that of all the parties of the year, there were none to which invitations were more eagerly desired than to that given by the old-maid sister of the farmer of Gairie.

Poor? Of a verity, no. Those who think that Aline-of-the-Silver-Hair was so poor that she ought not to have given parties know neither Aline nor yet what it means to be poor. To have more than enough—that is to be rich. To have the grasping, getting, insatiable, grudging heart—that is, spite of treasured millions, to be poor.

And you could not enter Aline's parlour, or sit in her speckless kitchen (which was a far better thing), without understanding that this woman, who never owned two five-pound notes at one time since she was born, was rich in love and faith and good works. Her very smile was far above rubies. If she liked you, you could see the pleasure with which out of her treasury she brought for your delectation things new and old. If she saw you glance that way, she would set in a better light the bust of Buonaparte on her mantelshelf, where it stood opposite to that of the Empress Josephine. And in the year 1812 that was a sure sign our gentle old lady could think for herself. There was also a map of Europe, with the Kingdom of Prussia left out, and that of Poland larger than All the Russias. It had been drawn (with the outlines done in water-colour) by Aline herself, when she went to the "finishing school" in Edinburgh—I am not going to tell you how many years ago, lest you should laugh at the dear old lady. And Aline is not to be laughed at, though one is not forbidden to smile; and if there is a little moisture in the eyes, so much the better.

The night of Aline McQuhirr's party arrived. By two o'clock her best black cap was on. The broad lace strings were tied under her chin, and over her shoulders a napkin of lawn was becomingly folded, the snowy whiteness of which threw up a kind of halo about Aline's soft face. This was to deceive anyone who happened to pass the window into thinking she was doing nothing. By four o'clock behold her sitting at the window as composed and ladylike as if she had done nothing else all day. Whereas you had only to look at the spread table winking and glittering, to know that she had been hasting to and fro since the February sun glinted in at the windows over the snowy blinds and cast the shadow of the potted geranium on the sill suddenly black upon the opposite wall.

As she sat thus, there came a rapping, light, quick, decided, at the door. The light kindled in Aline's tired eyes. Her heart beat almost like a lover's.

"Adora!" she murmured, half aloud, as, from being much alone, she had a habit of doing.

"I am so glad"—she said "gled," but leaden types cannot follow all these tender inflections, any more than mere words can describe the little shy touches of caressing with which she made Adora understand that of all people in the world she was the most welcome in that house—which, indeed, the spoilt young woman knew very well.

"I came sooner, that we might have a talk together before the others arrive. I hope you do not mind?" said Adora, as she took off her shawl.

Then she settled herself down upon a stool by Aline's side—"to be mothered," as

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she said. Which was strange, seeing that Aline never had a child and Adora remembered no mother. But the good mother and the true daughter were there, side by side, though Fate had robbed them of the relationship of blood.

"Was there no other reason?" said the old maid mother, with a quaint intonation, pinching gently the girl's cheek.

"Not what you think," replied Adora swiftly. "I declare there is more thought of love-making in that nice old silver-grey head of yours than in my whole body, soul, and spirit."

"Ah!" sighed Aline, "maybe that is true. And if so, the worse for both of us!"

"Nonsense! nonsense, Aline!" cried our emphatic Dora. "Never yet have I seen the man I would not make singularly unhappy if I married him. The lads never know when they are well off. If they did, they would let me alone!"

"And Roy McCulloch?" said the old lady almost in a whisper. She laid her thin hand very lightly on the girl's shoulder. Adora caught up at it laughingly, drew down the finger-tips and kissed them.

"Roy—Roy—Roy——" she chanted the name with a light trill that was half contempt and half a drolling affection. "Roy McCulloch! Will I never hear the beginning and end of Roy McCulloch? But I thought *you* would have known better!"

"Indeed, I wish you no worse fate, Dora," said her friend. "Roy McCulloch is one of the——"

"Yes, yes, I know," cried the girl, stopping her ears with the tips of her fingers. "I have heard all his perfections till I am as sick of them as a mill-horse of his round. I know them like the A B C at the end of the Catechism. He is strong; but not so strong as your brother Adam's plough-horse. He is wholesome; but so is a bowl of porridge! Good and innocent; but so is a quartern-loaf of English flour, at one-and-fivepence, out of Robin Affleck's!"

"No, no; you shall not, Dora!" said the old lady. "Listen——"

"And I hear them!" cried the girl, rising to her feet. "I was just in time. That is your nonsuch Roy, who has doubtless been waiting at the road-end to convoy me here. It is bad enough to have to go home with him, but Roy McCulloch down Lowran street at four of the clock in the afternoon—no, Aline, I thank you!"

Upon this arrived in quick succession Miss McQuhirr's guests, and very delicately the old lady welcomed them, according to each his standing and desert. Jock Fairies was among the first. His thatch of brown hair, left long at the back, had been pulled and plaited into the strangest queue and tied up with a piece of black ribbon much like a horse's tail on a fair day. But though Adora smiled at the appearance he presented, the good humour and real friendliness of Jock's chubby face soon made her forget the uncouthness of his appearance. There was one intruder. Sandy Ewan had ridden over from the new house of Boreland, stabling his horse in the village, where, finding that Adora had already taken wing, he had solaced himself by walking over with Charlotte Webster, who showed herself delighted to have the escort of so distinguished a cavalier. But to the party itself Sandy Ewan had not been invited. So, though he could have bought up little old maid Aline a score of times and never missed the price, yet there was no admittance for him into that poor self-respecting cot at the foot of the Gairie road-end. After lingering a little in full view of the windows, bidding repeated good-byes to Charlotte, Sandy took himself away up to the farmhouse, declaring with a loud laugh that "a man needed something more steeve than a wash of tea for his inside."

Nevertheless he looked back often as he went. For the shapely head of Adora Gracie had passed and repassed the window as he stood looking over Charlotte Webster's shoulder while pretending to talk to her—a proceeding which that young woman resented exceedingly and stored up against him for future repayment.

Very sagely Adora assisted her hostess to do the honours, and though she pretended to care nothing about such matters, she was secretly piqued that Roy McCulloch, after having shaken hands with her, appeared to devote his attention entirely to Charlotte Webster. That damsel, unaccustomed to homage from the handsome Roy, surrounded him with palpable airs of monopoly, even venturing to patronise Adora, to that lady's particular amusement and the great indignation of her silver-haired hostess, whose mental note ran thus: "Memorandum: Charlotte Webster—*not* to be asked next year."

Then Aline, in the proverbial expression, "set her brains to steep." That is, being resolved that no mere featherhead like Charlotte should put her Adora in the background, she summoned Roy to sit at her

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right hand, which gave him the maid of her heart upon his other side, while poor Charlotte was banished far down the table, and forced to console herself with the coltish whispered jocularities of Jock Fairies.

There is little to describe in an evening party at old maid Aline's save the impression of gentle refinement which was not without its effect on the rudest natures. Hope Meiklewham, the minister's daughter, would have given a bit of one of her pretty ears to be present; but that, by her position in society and her father's strictness, was denied to her. She proclaimed far and wide, however, that Aline herself was a better sermon on Christian virtues than had ever been preached in Lowran since the day when the great outcast minister, John McMillan, went down the kirk-brae for the last time.

People did not argue at Aline's. They never quarrelled. There was not too much love-making, but enough. What there was, was conducted quietly, discreetly, mostly with the eyelashes. There was also some singing, and Aline told the famous story of her uncle David and the widow's dun cow —when, as usual, she forgot the point. Which was the point.

In short, these folk, far from the life of towns, enjoyed quietly and sensibly the good things which were within their reach. Their talk was sensible on the whole. And whatsoever failed of that was cheerful sane fooling, which hindered no man nor hurt any woman. There was nothing either said or done that little old maid Aline need have shut her ears to.

But in the background of the idyll, up in the parlour of the farmhouse of Gairie, sat the foul Fiend—such a fiend as in these times is permitted to go visibly abroad in the face of day—drinking whisky-toddy with Adam McQuhirr. Though fond of his glass, the farmer of Gairie wanted sadly to get down to his sister's party. But he was a man who found a difficulty in saying "No," and besides, he did not know when he might need what is technically called "an obleegement" from such an important person as Sandy Ewan.

So he sat there in his dusky parlour, making friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, and entertaining the devil in all innocence of heart. For a man who is given to hospitality may at times entertain both kinds of angels, equally at unaware.

The evening wore all too rapidly to the butt. The voices in the cot at the loaning-end sounded more and more cheerfully through the darkness. A consciousness of the black night all about made the lights burn ever clearer within. The lilted songs, the slow turn of Scots humour, the quick-running saucy jest—this last mostly from Adora Gracie—the ease of speech and unbound heart, made the hours speed all too fast to the parting. The guests made their adieus, Roy lingering on the doorstep for Adora, while Aline whispered in her ear as she lovingly settled her own shawl about the young girl's head and over her shoulders —a beautiful white Cashmere shawl, the old maid's chiefest treasure.

And meantime, expectant upon the short grass of the knowes without, Fate, smelling of whisky-toddy, crouched waiting.

Without words spoken, Roy had settled the question that he was to see Adora home, She would not, he knew, refuse him that. It was provided for in their contract of brother and sister. He had been reading Smollett's continuation of Hume's History, and was prepared for discussion. He ran over certain points in his mind. No, he had not forgotten anything. He was perfect even in his dates.

He stood silently admiring, as with a turn of her head, shapely even when half hidden in the folds of a shawl, Adora turned sideways to grasp her skirts, swinging them upward with a little petulant shake. Then her other hand was ready to be laid upon Strong Mac's arm. When he felt the pressure, light as a feather, it seemed to him that he became weak as a little child.

Once they were started, Roy searched for a conversational opening in order to take away the character of Queen Elizabeth, but Adora's first words made this somewhat difficult.

"Why did you not go home with Charlotte Webster?" she asked in wondering tones. "It was very ill-done of Aline to call you away from Charlotte's society!"

In another girl, and with another suitor, this would have been the invitation of the country coquette—nothing more or less. But each knew the other, and Roy declined his opportunity. He did not even pretend to misunderstand.

"You were busy," said Strong Mac, "and I could wait."

"You need not have waited with Charlotte Webster," said Adora, with something like a pout of human disapproval. "Tell me, what did you talk to her about?"

"About——" Strong Mac hesitated; then with a burst of confidence, "we talked about the Reformation and Queen Mary!"

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"Forced to console herself with the coltish whispered jocularities of Jock Fairies."

Clear and merry rang Adora's laugh of scorn.

"The Reformation—and Charlotte Webster!" she cried. "That were a Reformation indeed to talk about. Well, how far did you get? Did you fall out about Queen Mary? It is easy to come to loggerheads about the Reformation!"

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"No," said Mac, smiling. "We did not quarrel."

"Ah!" said Adora, simmering with mischief, "tell me all you talked about—every word—and especially what Charlotte had to say about the Reformation!"

"Oh, she did not say very much," continued the traitor Roy, as the manner of men is, purchasing favour by maligning the other woman. "We did not get very far. For the fact is, Charlotte thought that John Knox was the man they killed because he played the fiddle to the Queen!"

Adora clutched at Roy's arm, and on the hard road her feet danced a little joyous jig.

"Oh, you *dears*—both of you!" she cried. And spite of entreaty, she refused to explain this mysterious eulogium. Strong Mac felt that he could extract but little comfort from an expression of affection which he shared with Charlotte Webster. But then, again, the little clutch on the arm had not been divided. That was his own, and he thankfully stored it away to be a comfort to him through lonely days and nights sleepless.

Then advancing from post to pillar like the true encroaching lover whose motto is (or ought to be) *Toujours l'audace!* Strong Mac now proved somewhat unenterprising. He listened happily to Adora's fast-flowing talk, his slow faithful heart thrilling like an instrument of strings to the lightest ripple of her laughter. She spoke of her father with good-humoured insight into his lighter weaknesses, sometimes softening her voice to a kind of pride which was not without its tragic aspect.

Unconsciously they had lingered a little. The other pairs and groups had scattered this way and that. To Roy there was something wonderfully moving in the sense he had of the nearness of the girl he loved. Little dainty touches of lace, the pleasant rustle of silk, an atmosphere of maiden freshness all strange to his womanless home, fretted his heart with desirings acute as they were indefinite. Nevertheless he was happy, thus walking, listening, putting in a word here and there, his heart beating all the while almost audibly. No talk of histories now, or the great deeds of great men, but simple homely gossip, the nothings of personality that please boys and girls when the years are yet few, when "I" and "she" make all the world, when the blood tingles quick in the veins, and when life tastes fresh and strong as the first blatter of brine blown in the face of one who travels seaward.

They were ascending the long brae at the top of which is situated the Lowran kirk. Down in the hollow there had been only a soughing stillness; but as they mounted the kirk-hill, the breeze came suddenly out of the west, moaning and creaking among the glimmering cross-hatching of the bare branches above. At which, with the quick causeless resolution of the bashful, Roy put his hand upon Adora's as it lay across his sleeve.

"I have kept my word to you," he said. "I have neither gone to the smuggling nor yet sought fur or feather off our own land since I gave you my promise."

For reward Adora let her hand remain where it was, sure that the limit of his encroachment was reached. Indeed, too sure.

"I thank you, Roy," she answered, softly for her. But her heart desired more—nay, required it from the man she was to love.

* * * * *

At that moment half-a-dozen dark shapes, suddenly rising out of the deep blackness of a wayside copse, threw themselves upon Roy McCulloch. There was a waving of lanterns. From every side men came running.

"We have him!" cried two or three voices. "Hold him! Hold him!" cried others.

One man caught Adora roughly by the arm and dragged her away from her escort.

With a sudden roar of anger like a lion roused, Strong Mac sent the four who held him reeling this way and that, and sprang upon the man who had touched Adora.

But the girl, though bewildered by the suddenness of the onslaught, knew well where lay the greatest danger. Had Strong Mac smitten once in that fierce wrath of his, the assailant might never have spoken again. The fellow let go his hold and stood cowering on his defence.

"He has not hurt me, Roy!" she cried. "Do not strike!"

But Roy, disregarding a feeble blow aimed at him, already had the man by the throat, while a fresh cloud of assailants was flinging itself on his shoulders and striving to pull him to the ground. At the sound of Adora's voice the young man slackened his grip and caught up a heavy club of blackthorn which had fallen to the ground. With one mighty effort he rid himself of his foes, and putting Adora behind him, stood clear with his back to the steep bank, swinging the cudgel over his head.

"Now what does this mean?" he shouted. "Quick, out with it, you scoundrels, or I will break every bone in your bodies!"

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"*In the King's name!*" gasped the man who had caught Adora by the arm. "Roy McCulloch, I arrest you by warrant of the Sheriff."

"And on what charge?" said Roy calmly.

"Sheep-stealing!" answered the officer.

At this point a horseman rode up hastily from the direction of the Gairie farmhouse.

"What have we here?" he cried. "By what right do you dare to lay hands on this gentleman?"

The new-comer was Sandy Ewan, who had sat thus long with Adam McQuhirr over the whisky-toddy. Adora sprang towards him.

"Save him!" she said eagerly. "Tell them he is innocent. You know he is innocent!"

"Officer, I demand to be told the meaning of this!" cried Sandy Ewan sternly. "I warn you that if there is anything wrong, you shall suffer for it. I am a justice of the peace. Who accuses Roy McCulloch of sheep-stealing?"

"Here is the Sheriff's warrant, sir," said the man sullenly. "Ye can read it for yoursel'! And if I mistake not, the offence charged is the stealing of your ain sheep, Maister Ewan!"

"But who is the informant?" demanded the gentleman-farmer truculently. "Answer me that. It is true that I may have lost a sheep or two at odd times, but I would as soon have thought of accusing myself as my old" (he searched for words) "friend and companion, Roy McCulloch!"

"I have no claim to be either!" said Strong Mac, standing calmly at bay. "I decline your assistance, Alexander Ewan. Officer, let me see your warrant; and if it be in order and you are doing your duty, I will go with you peaceably to answer this or any other charge!"

The paper was handed over. A subordinate held a lantern to enable Strong Mac to read the warrant for his apprehension upon information laid before the Sheriff Substitute of Kirkcudbright.

"I will accompany you," said Roy quietly; "but first let us go a few yards out of our way to convoy this lady to her home. We can follow the cross-road through the policies, and thus avoid the village."

Among the men there was some demur. It was far about—a dark inconvenient road, liable to accident of sudden assault or rescue.

"Tut!" said Sandy Ewan, "do as you are bid. If Roy McCulloch had wanted to be rescued, he and I together could throw the whole of you into the Lowran burn in five minutes. But I will tell you what to do. First put the young lady in security, and do you all accompany me to my house of Boreland, where it will be a great pleasure to me to entertain you till the morning. I will then provide a conveyance in which to take your prisoner to Kirkcudbright."

The men looked at each other. It seemed an easy way out of a difficulty. There was, indeed, no great desire among them to undertake the long night's travel to Kirkcudbright with Roy McCulloch on their hands. The chief officer was inclined to yield, but the prisoner stood stiffly upon his rights to prison and an immediate confrontation with the Sheriff.

"Go with Sandy Ewan, Roy," whispered Adora. "Perhaps you may find out what is the meaning of all this."

"It is only a plot to get rid of me!" was Roy's indignant answer.

"No matter," the girl answered eagerly; "do as I bid you. I myself will tell your father all that has happened in the morning. Go with Sandy Ewan—I think he means to be kind."

Roy said no more, and the party turned sharply to the right through the policies of Lowran Great House—the lanterns making a waving patch of illumination about them as they proceeded. In the ditch of the sunk fences little wreaths of unmelted snow, sodden and grey in the daytime, flashed up into startling whiteness, the ragged hoops and tangles of the dripping brambles standing black against them.

Adora stopped at the little school loaning. Roy held out his hand. There was no word in their hearts which either of them could speak to the other before so many. But as Roy stood dumb before her with the eyes of a faithful animal, strong, yet pitiful, all suddenly Adora set her hands on his neck, pulled down his face towards her and kissed him.

That was at once her defiance and the symbol of her faith.

And as he tramped away in the darkness, the men marching sullenly and apathetically about him, and Sandy Ewan chewing some bitter cud upon his horse's back as he followed, Roy thought with pride and joy that Adora had kissed him because she loved him. It was natural he should think so.

You see, he was a man.

(*To be continued.*)

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THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

By F. Klickmann.

"LET us be the first institution that ever emanated from one of the nations of Europe for the express purpose of doing good to all the rest." Such was the motto of a pamphlet put forward, at the beginning of the last century, by a few earnest-minded, philanthropic men, who had conceived the idea of starting a society for "The General Dispersion of the Holy Scriptures at Home and Abroad."

The proposal originated at a committee meeting of the Tract Society on December 7th, 1802. A minister from Wales who was present on that occasion told a pathetic story of the dearth of Bibles in his native land. He urged the Tract Society to issue some cheap Welsh Bibles for circulation among the peasants of the Principality. While he was speaking, a thought suggested itself to one of the listeners, which was destined to result in what has been termed the greatest literary enterprise of the nineteen Christian centuries. "If such a plan were likely to prove useful to Wales, why not to other lands?" the secretary remarked. "Surely a society might be formed for the purpose of translating and circulating the Books of the Old and New Testaments for the Continent—for the World!"

THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY, IN QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, E.C.

The idea appealed to that little gathering with singular force. Further meetings were arranged to formulate a scheme in detail. Finally on March 7th, 1804, as the outcome of these deliberations, the British and Foreign Bible Society was born.

Its success was speedy and decisive. From the first it enlisted the sympathies of some of the most prominent and influential men in the country; and what is still more remarkable, from the very outset down to the present time, it has proved the broad platform on which Christians of the most diverse views meet and work in unison. It is oblivious of denominations, sects, and creeds. Its concern is solely with the Bible: its aim is to issue it broadcast to all tongues and all peoples, "without note or comment"; and, in consequence, it is the chief religious institution that is able to associate and unify all Christian communions. In this particular its policy has never varied. The founders recognised that the business management must be so arranged as to commend itself equally to all denominations; therefore three secretaries were appointed to represent respectively the Established Church, the Nonconforming Churches, and the Reformed Churches of the Continent. It was also

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resolved that the Committee should consist of thirty-six laymen, fifteen of whom must be members of the Church of England, and fifteen members of other Christian communions, the remaining six to be foreigners resident in London. The same representative character has been faithfully adhered to through the hundred years of the Society's existence; and to-day this even balance of denominational interests is maintained not only in the Committee, but also in the official staff.

The work of the Bible Society is twofold: it is concerned firstly with the translation and revision of the Scriptures into all the languages of mankind; and secondly, in the printing and circulation of these books as cheaply as possible over the whole of the inhabited globe. One of the early acts of the Society was to issue a large edition of the Scriptures at low prices in the Welsh language. But from the first it had no frontier, and earnestly considered the needs of lands beyond our own.

A century ago the Bible was current in about forty different languages. To-day, some part of the Bible is published in over four hundred languages, including every great vernacular of the world. Of these, 367 appear on the list of the Bible Society. Between fifty and sixty sets of characters are employed in printing these languages; while in order to make the Scriptures legible and intelligible to all races and creeds, there are fifty languages in which a version is printed in two or more different characters.

Few persons unconnected with the work can form any estimate of the immense amount of labour involved in translating a single Gospel into the speech of some savage tribe. First of all that speech must be mastered by daily familiar intercourse with the savages themselves. Next it must be reduced to writing and grammar. Then there remains the most trying task of all—to discover terms that will convey to untutored minds the moral and spiritual significance of the great watchwords of the Bible. What does a cannibal understand of such terms as Faith, Hope, and Love? He has nothing in his vocabulary to correspond with the elemental ideas of the Gospel. As an instance of the time and actual drudgery this work entails, it may be mentioned that Henry Nott, the companion of

THE ENTRANCE-HALL OF THE BIBLE HOUSE.

John Williams, spent twenty years in Tahiti to perfect himself in the language of the island, and then devoted another twenty years to translating the Scriptures into Tahitan. The recent revision of the Lifu Bible, for the largest of the Loyalty Islands, involved no less than 52,310 corrections. Some idea of the expense of this branch of the Bible Society's work may be gained from the following representative cases. The last revision of the Malagasi Bible cost the Society over £3,000. To

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Dr. Morrison and his assistants, for producing the first Chinese Bible, grants were made to the extent of £10,000. To Dr. William Carey and his associates in the various Serampore versions, produced early in the nineteenth century, the Society's grants of money and material reached a total of £30,000. Last year alone the payments made by the Society for translations and revisions amounted to nearly £4,000. At the present time about one thousand representative linguists, missionaries, and native assistants are organised into committees in different parts of the world. Their work is supervised and financed from the Bible House, whose editorial sub-committee, composed mainly of philological experts, meets every month. During the past year matters for consideration came before this committee relating to 151 languages and dialects. The latest translation published by the Society is part of St. Matthew's Gospel in Yalunka, for C.M.S. missionaries, in the hinterland of Sierra Leone.

THE FAMOUS LIBRARY AT THE BIBLE HOUSE.
On the shelves are Scriptures in four hundred languages.

To an Englishman, the diversity of speech to be found in one country is often a matter of amazement. For instance, last year the Society's agents sold the Scriptures in more than twenty different languages in the Empire of Austria, and in more than fifty different languages in the Empire of Russia; while it prints some portion of the Bible in eighty-one of the different tongues indigenous to Africa. In this respect the Bible Society may be regarded as the world's greatest philological institute. It has crystallised and reduced to written form the speech of scores of barbaric tribes which had not so much as an alphabet. Before the first rush of gold-seekers invaded the Yukon Valley, the Society had already printed most of the New Testament in Tukudh for the Indians of Klondyke.

Moreover, one of its ideals has been not only to produce the Bible in every tongue, but to secure one single and accepted version in each language, that shall be as correct as careful revision at the hands of competent scholars can make it. By this means the Society seeks to avoid the misfortune of rival sectarian translations in the mission-field.

As illustrating the widespread value of the Society's translation, it is interesting to quote from a letter written last January by Sir Edwin Arnold to the Bible Society, in which he says: "I owe a great deal to your Society as a teacher of languages. Out of ten or a dozen which I could read before becoming blind, I picked up two or three at least, by using your translations into Hindustani, Persian, Sanscrit, Japanese, and Spanish as a book to begin with. It was so convenient to know by heart the grand old text while picking up the new tongue."

With a view to economy, foreign Bibles are printed in or near the countries for which they are intended, whenever it is possible and advantageous to do so. Thus the Chinese Scriptures are most admirably produced in Yokohama. By this means the expense of freightage is saved—often a heavy item. For instance, when the first vernacular Bibles were sent out to Uganda,

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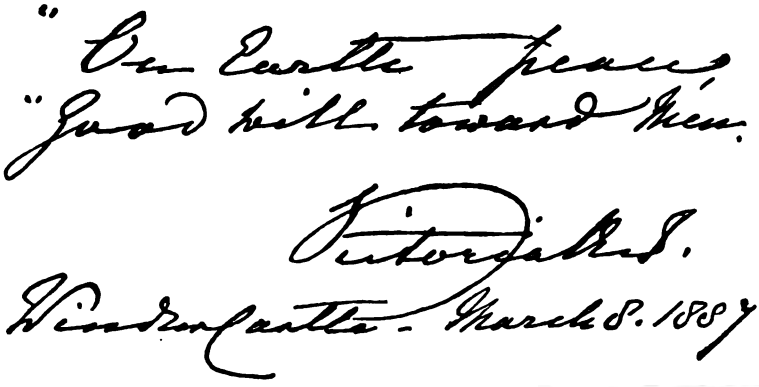

QUEEN VICTORIA'S FAVOURITE TEXT, WRITTEN FOR THE BIBLE SOCIETY ON HER JUBILEE.

each copy, which had cost the Society 6*s.* 4*d.* to produce, entailed another 10*s.* 4*d.* for carriage from London to Uganda, as goods had to be conveyed inland from the coast on the heads of native porters. Moreover, quite apart from the question of freightage, it is a distinct gain if the Bible be issued in type and paper with which its readers are already familiar.

Another interesting section of the Society's work is the providing of Scriptures in Moon and Braille types for the blind—not only in Europe, but also in India and the East, where there are a far larger proportion than in our own country. Her late Majesty Queen Victoria took much interest in this work, as is evidenced by the following letter: "Her Majesty is gratified to find how much is being done for the education of the blind in India, and also to know that these useful efforts were initiated chiefly by you. The Queen congratulates you on the admirable results of your labours, and trusts that you may be blessed with health and strength to continue them."

In addition to preparing the Scriptures in all tongues for all people, the Bible Society

BIBLE PRESENTED TO KING EDWARD VII—

—ON HIS CORONATION.

Two photographs by Campbell and Gray.

is also engaged in circulating them far and wide. Since its foundation it has issued over 180,000,000 copies. Its output last year was over 5,000,000 copies, complete or in portions. The circulation is accomplished by various means. The average number of colporteurs now employed by the Society exceeds 800; and the Society's budget for colportage expenses is over

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£42,500 per annum. Unlike the Society's agents and sub-agents, who are stationed at depôts in busy centres, the colporteur, who is usually a native of the country in which he works, makes his way along the bypaths and far from the beaten track. He is a curiously interesting figure, this "Man with the Book." He is of every shade of colour and is frequently of humble origin. He travels from town to town, and from one village to another, like a pedlar, with his pack of Testaments and Gospels. He is chosen for the work not merely on account of his business capacity, but because he is likewise a lover of the Book he carries,

COLPORTEUR AND DONKEY-CART IN ROME.

and is able to recommend it from personal knowledge and conviction. He encounters severe hardships and is frequently in actual danger of his life. More particularly is this the case in Mohammedan countries, where fanaticism is instinct in the blood, combined with a racial antagonism to an alien faith. The most recent martyr to the cause was El Kaid, one of the Society's colporteurs in Morocco, and a convert from Islam to Christianity. He was openly attacked, last August, in the streets of Morocco, and succumbed to the injuries he received. Perils of other kinds also beset the path of the colporteur in regions where brigandage is more practised than piety. In 1900, one of the Society's Russian colporteurs, a Georgian monk, set out to cross the Caucasus, but has never been heard of since.

Yet these men seem undaunted by difficulty. They are at work among the exiles and emigrants in Siberia; they make their way into the noisome sulphur-mines of Sicily; we find them among the navvies engaged on the Simplon Tunnel; among the coolies on the sugar-plantations in British Guiana; on the vessels in the world's great harbours and those passing through the Suez Canal; outside Buddhist temples in Korea; in the prisons of Formosa; on Japanese railway-cars; and in the isolated homesteads and hamlets of Nova Scotia.

As to adventures nearer home, have not some of them found an abiding place in English literature in the travel volumes of that fascinating enthusiast and "brilliant amateur of letters," George Borrow? That delightful author's "The Bible in Spain" and "The Gipsies of Spain" were, of course, the immediate outcome of his commission by the Bible Society to travel through Spain on their behalf. In that capacity Borrow spent some five years in Spain, during the disturbed early years of Isabella II., travelling over every part of Castille and Leon, as well as the southern part of the Peninsula and northern Portugal. His adventurous habit again and again brought him into collision with both brigands and Carlists, as well as with the orthodox Roman Catholic priesthood, and he was for a time imprisoned in Madrid.

The colporteur's method of travel is as varied as his own nationality. In Malasia, he employs a bullock-wagon or a native boat; in Lombardy he scours the country on a bicycle; in Russia his sledge jingles across

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the frozen steppes; on the slopes of the Andes he trusts to the sure-footed mule. One colporteur made an eleven weeks' tour down the Lena, a Siberian river 3,000 miles long, selling Gospels to the Yakuts in their own language in the villages along the banks. Part of the way he and his wife travelled—with half a ton of Scriptures—on an open raft, one keeping watch at night for fear of robbers, while the other slept. In Mongolia, where no other Christian organisation is working, the Society's sub-agent traverses the desolate plains with a small caravan of camels, visiting the nomad tribes in their camps.

THE SOCIETY'S NATIVE STAFF AT SHANGHAI.

And this brings us to another vital element in the Society's work. It often acts as the pioneer—or, as it has been called, the "ploughshare"—of missions, sending its colporteurs into new countries and opening up the ground by means of a dispersion of the Gospel; so that when the missionary arrives, he sometimes finds, as in Korea, the people prepared beforehand and waiting for his teaching.

Again, the Society wins permission to work in some fields that are closed to normal missionary enterprise. In the Russian Empire, for example, which embraces one-seventh of the earth's surface, and 130,000,000 of its people, Church and State alike encourage and assist the Society's agents, who even obtain free rail and steamer passes and

THE FIRST BIBLE CART IN MANCHURIA.

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free carriage for the Bibles; yet this is an Empire that excludes ordinary foreign missionaries. The Society's colporteurs are exempt from certain taxes in the Argentine and Buenos Ayres; while generous concessions are made by railways in Demerara, Costa Rica, Buenos Ayres, Uruguay, as well as by Spronston's Steamboat Co. and the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co. In the Soudan, for political reasons, no aggressive missionary work is permitted at present among the Moslem population; but the Bible Society three years ago was allowed to establish a depôt at Omdurman opposite the door of the new mosque; and two Arab colporteurs sell the Scriptures along the Blue and the White Nile. The mysterious highlands of Tibet have been sealed for centuries against Europeans, but the New Testament has been translated into Tibetan, and is printed for the Society by Tibetan Christians at Ghoom, on the Himalayas. These books are bought by traders, who carry them back into the snowy fastnesses of that great, unknown land, and into the mysterious city of Lhasa.

Abyssinia is also a "closed country" to missionary enterprise; but not to the Scriptures. In 1900, the Bible Society sent some specially bound copies of the freshly corrected Ethiopic New Testament for presentation to the Emperor Menelek and his Queen. The Society's agent in Alexandria received a reply, of which the following is the literal translation:—

"The conquering Lion of the tribe of Judah, Menelek the Second, Emperor of Ethiopia by the will of God. Peace and health from God to the Honourable Mr. Alfred Cooper. The two copies of the New Testament, which were sent by the hand of the Englishman, were duly received, and I tender my best thanks for them. If you send a quantity of these books to Adis Abeba by a person, bearer of a letter from you, they will be received with pleasure, and I will see that they are distributed and that a good price is paid for them. Written at Adis Abeba, on the 23rd day of Tonba, 1893" (1901 A.D.).

A magnificent pair of elephant's tusks reached the Bible House some years earlier as a gift from his Majesty; but this is the first occasion on which an emperor has offered to act as the Society's agent in his own capital!

GROUP OF INDIAN COLPORTEURS, TAKEN AT A CONFERENCE IN ALLAHABAD, AUGUST, 1900.

In addition to its colporteurs, the Society also supports 620 native Christian Bible-women in the East, in connection with nearly 50 different missionary organisations.

An important feature in the work of the Bible Society is the way it serves as the chief storehouse from which all British, and not a few Continental, foreign missions must draw their supplies. As a rule, books for the foreign field are granted on such terms that they cost practically nothing to the missions which receive them. No genuine application for a grant of Scriptures has ever been denied. No missionary society's request to print and publish a properly

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COLPORTEUR'S BOAT ON THE PAHANG RIVER.

authenticated version of the Scriptures in a new tongue has ever been refused. The Church Missionary Society uses ninety different translations; the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts has been supplied with sixty foreign languages; while Nonconformist foreign missions obtain from it the bulk of all the Scriptures they use.

The unique business aspect of the Society's work cannot but command attention. It is the biggest commercial undertaking in existence which is indifferent to profit and is run deliberately at a financial loss. The expenditure of the Society during the first year of its operations was £691. Last year it spent £241,143.

A COLPORTEUR'S CART IN LUZON.
Photo by Squires & Lingham.

Altogether it has expended over £13,000,000. But only a percentage of this returns to its coffers.

It must be clearly understood, however, that the normal policy of the Society has always been to sell, and not to give the Scriptures away indiscriminately. World-wide experience proves most conclusively that any book for which a price, however small, has been paid, will be valued and read

COLPORTAGE BY BULLOCK-CART: IN THE MALAY PENINSULA.

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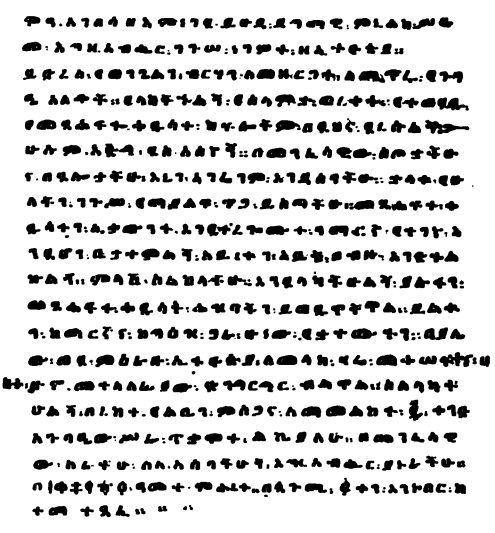
far more than one which costs nothing. Therefore under ordinary circumstances a nominal charge is made for the books. But the price asked is usually so entirely out of proportion to the cost of production, that the bulk of the Bibles are sold at a loss; which becomes relatively greater as the editions grow cheaper. For instance, over seven million copies of the English Penny Testament have been issued, at a net loss of over £25,000. A Bengali Gospel, which costs the Society a penny to produce, is sold in the Calcutta bazaars for a *pice* (*i.e.*, a farthing), and this farthing is swallowed up in freightage, etc. Yet this is definitely in keeping with the initial motive of the Society's foundation, which was to make



FACSIMILE OF THE LETTER OF THE EMPEROR MENELEK TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY.

Bibles cheap and plentiful. Moreover, the Society's agents have perfect liberty to give copies where it seems expedient to them to do so. And another relaxation of the rule is found, not only in the free grants of Bibles to the mission-field, but also in the many other large consignments which are sent out gratis for some definite object. 400,000 French Gospels were distributed at the gates of the Paris Exhibition; Gospels have been distributed for nearly seventy years to the Easter pilgrims at Jerusalem. 100,000 "Khaki" Testaments and Gospels were given to the South African troops; Scriptures in Dutch were distributed among the thousands of Boer refugees and prisoners, and among the women and children in the Concentration Camps. Every student who

THE ROYAL SEAL ATTACHED TO THE LETTER OF THE EMPEROR MENELEK.

graduates in China and India is presented with a copy of the Scriptures, about 11,000 copies being given to students in China alone last year. In England, generous grants are made year by year to orphanages, hospitals, asylums, soldiers' and sailors' homes, theological training-colleges, prisons, barracks, training-ships, and schools of all denominations. On these home operations the Society expends £10,000 annually.

One great factor in the Society's success has been its policy of decentralisation. Whereas most large organisations seek to focus themselves at one point, its aim has been to spread self-governing auxiliaries all over the world. In England, these auxiliaries and branches number about 5,800; and 2,000 more lie over-seas. In Australia,

A COLPORTEUR IN BOLIVIA.

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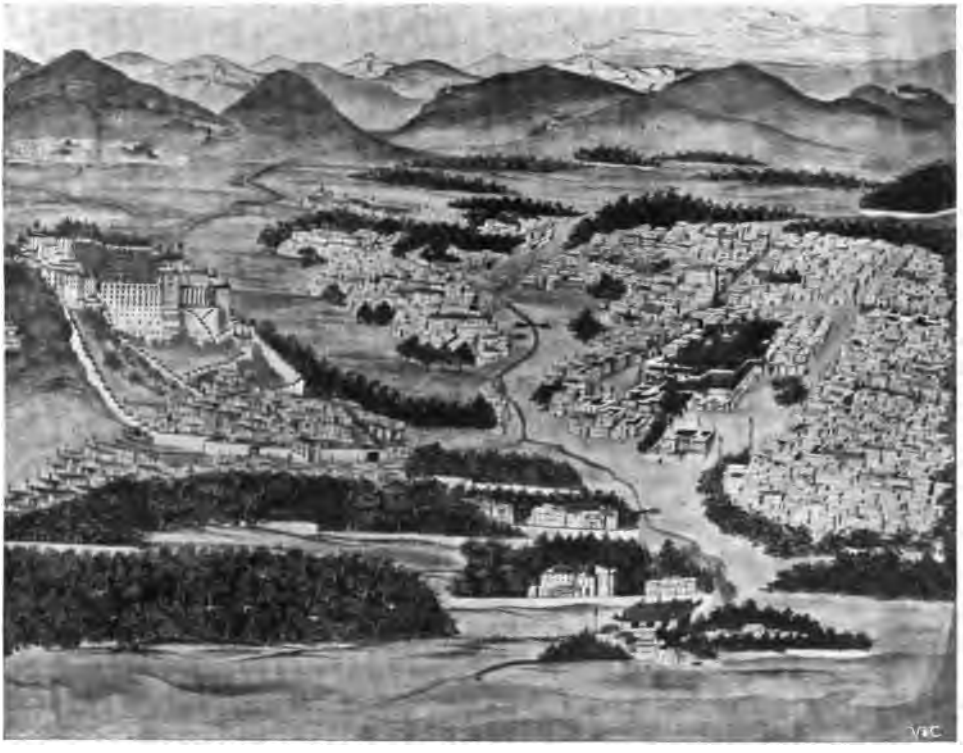
Canada, and New Zealand, the Society's powerful auxiliaries not only defray their own expenses, and themselves undertake the printing and passing through the press of certain versions, such as those for the New Hebrides and New Guinea, but they also remit substantial contributions annually to the parent Society.

And it must not be forgotten that the Bible Society is emphatically a progressive institution. On the shelves of its famous library in Queen Victoria Street, side by side with "Tyndale" and "Coverdale" Bibles, and a copy of the first Bible printed in America—in the language of the vanished Indians of Massachusetts — stands the latest edition of the Revised Version. This is sufficiently indicative of the wide range of its literary scope. In its home and foreign administration, the watchword has always been "Onward!" and never more so than at the present time.

Photo by] *[J. F. Drysdale.*

INTERIOR OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY'S DEPÔT IN FORMOSA.

In March, 1903, it entered upon the



THE MYSTERIOUS CITY OF LHASA.

From a painting, now in the Bible House, which was sold last year to the Society's agent on the Tibet frontier, by a native artist, who had forfeited his right to return to the country by painting this "Holy City." Only two other pictures of Lhasa are known, one in the possession of the Royal Geographical Society, and the other the property of the French Geographical Society.

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one hundredth year of its existence; and to commemorate this a special fund of 250,000 guineas is being raised, to be devoted to the further extension of its work abroad.

The normal income of the Society arises from the subscriptions, donations, and legacies of Christian people all over the world, the annual subscribers including his Majesty the German Emperor. From its first beginning, the Society has depended on these voluntary contributions to make up the huge difference each year between what it receives from the sale of books and what it spends in their translation, publication, and circulation. At present, it gets back by sales about forty per cent. of its total outlay. In recent years the urgent demands on the Society have multiplied much more rapidly than its income has increased. And this Centenary Fund, to which his Majesty the King has sent a hundred guineas, represents the estimated sum necessary to meet such new claims.

Innumerable great centenary meetings are to be held in Great Britain and the Colonies during the coming year. But undoubtedly the most remarkable date will be Sunday, March 6th, 1904, which is to be observed as "Bible Sunday" in all Christian denominations throughout the entire world—an international celebration unparalleled in history, which will recall, in the most dramatic and impressive fashion, the dictum of the late Master of Balliol:—

"All Christians have at least two things in common. They have the Bible, and they have Sunday."

THE TURN OF THE TIDE.

NOW, it befell, on a windy day,
In a waste and barren place,
That I met my love in a turn of the way,
And met her face to face.

And never a single word spake she,
Nor ever looked at me,
For her eyes were set afar, far off,
Over the open sea.

Now tell me truly and tell me well,
Is it the sound of the rock-bound bell,
Is it presage of strain and storm and pain?
Or yet once more and yet again
Is it the thought that never we twain
As of old shall tryst in the soft salt mist
That holds thy gaze so steadily
Over and out to the open sea?

'Tis the night rides up the streets of the west,
'Tis the tide turns back with never a rest
To the ceaseless ravel, the tireless travel,
The heaving settle of ebb and flow.
As the seaweed goeth, so shall I go;
As the seaway goeth, the night wind bloweth,
My way shall be their will with me—
Night and the wind of Destiny.

My love she turned with a rising sigh,
She turned, she turned from me.
The wind drove by with a sobbing cry—
And she walked wearily.

But never a single word spake she,
Nor ever looked at me,
For her eyes were set afar, far off,
Over the open sea.

THORNTON SHERBURNE HARDY.

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"I WONDER!"

FROM A PAINTING BY BEATRICE OFFOR.

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PNEUMATIC FISHES.

By EDWARD STEP, F.L.S.

MANY of the virtues we take pleasure in applauding or condemning when practised by our fellow-bipeds are reproduced among the lower animals, and the student of living Nature is constantly being struck by them. This fact is calculated to give equal joy to two classes of men often opposed to each other—the theologian must see in it proof that man has fallen from a higher estate to the level of the beasts, whilst the evolutionist would accept it as part of the evidence that man has risen from a lowlier condition. This thought has been suggested by the fact that as there are men who prosper by the avoidance of all corporal exertion, so are there lower creatures who range the globe without an effort, and instead of pursuing the unending search for food, get themselves conveyed to it, and do little more than open their mouths to receive it.

REMORA.

A notable instance of this truth is found in the Ship Barnacle, who starts life as an active swimming crustaccan, but soon tires of exertion and says: "Here's a fine ship! Go to! Let us charter it for our pleasure!" It is true, he does not occupy cabins and state-rooms, but he fixes himself permanently on the bottom, casts off all his swimming gear, and becomes a nondescript character with whom no respectable crab or lobster would acknowledge kinship. But a Barnacle always thrives and has the run of all the oceans. The crustaceans are notorious for tricks of this sort, and are willing to humble themselves to the position of clinging parasites if by so doing they may live well and avoid exertion. I could give other instances, but I should be taken far off the real subject of this paper.

There are fishes who act in like fashion, to some extent, at least, though they decline to give up the likeness of their class. One of these has been notorious from days of hoary antiquity, and even the ancient poets took note of his ways—working a little embroidery of their own round the story, of course. This fish was known to them as the Remora, and it was reputed to have such enormous power that it could stay a ship in its course though all the sails were set and a good breeze were blowing. It was declared that on the fateful day of the battle of Actium, Antony's ship was held back by a Remora that had fixed itself to the bottom, in spite of the efforts of hundreds of oarsmen. A like annoyance befell Caligula in a journey from Astura to Antium, when a Remora attached itself to his vessel and stayed its progress. Now, the Remora on this occasion was simply desirous of getting a free passage, and attached itself to the bottom of the imperial galley, where its discovery afforded sufficient evidence of its monstrous strength.

The degree of power accredited to this fish by the ancients is well shown by Oppian in his *Halieutica*:—

The Sucking Fish beneath, with secret chains
Clung to the keel, the swiftest ship detains;
The seamen run confused, no labour spared,
Let fly the sheets and hoist the topmost yard;
The master bids them give her all the sails,
To court the wind and catch the coming gales.
But though the canvas bellies with the blast,
And boisterous winds bow down the cracking mast,
The bark stands firmly rooted in the sea,
And will unmoved nor winds nor waves obey.
Still as when calms have flattened all the plain,
And infant waves scarce wrinkle on the main,
No ship in harbour moored so careless rides
When ruffling waters mark the flowing tides.
Such sudden force the floating captive binds,
Though beat by waves and urged by driving winds:
Appalled, the sailors stare through strange surprise,
Believe they dream and rub their waking eyes.

That this staying power was universally believed is attested by the name given to the fish, which is none other than the Latin word for a hindrance. The reader may well be pardoned if the foregoing has given him the notion that the Remora is a huge sea-beast. If he will picture it mentally as the size of a large sprat, he will understand that

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the possession of an adhesive disc, by which it clings to sharks and ships, does not also confer the power to stay the course of a large body. This sucking instrument is apparently a modification of the first back fin. It has a central ridge, and a variable number of transverse plates, each ending in a small marginal spine, and enclosed in a fleshy border. On applying the flexible border to the surface of some transport agent, the transverse plates are depressed and a vacuum created. It is said that when not so fixed, the Remora swims with its back downwards, a statement borne out to a certain extent by the fact that its under side is dark and the upper side light, a complete reversal of the plan generally followed in the coloration of fishes. The Remora is common in the Mediterranean, and has been taken rarely on our own shores; but we have several other fishes endowed with sucking-discs, whose occurrence is by no means infrequent on the British coasts, though the fishes do not go for free trips attached to ships

YOUNG LUMP-SUCKER, SHOWING THE TWO BACK FINS.

The best known of these native sea-suckers is the Lump, one of the most remarkable in form of our fishes. Its facial expression is not particularly fish-like, but rather that of a happy fat boy, with full lips, plump rosy cheeks, and prominent red eyes. This non-fish-like appearance has earned it the name of Sea-owl in some places. Its coloration, too, is singular — pink, carmine, purple, blue, orange, dark brown, and black, laid on in no definite pattern, but in promiscuous streaks and clouds which suggest that the colours have run somewhat one into the other. The Lump's skeleton shows no very great departure from the usual type of structure, but the living Lump is so invested by a thick coat of blubber that his structural plan is hidden. His headquarters are in northern seas, where he probably finds his great-coat serviceable, as do the seals and whales. The seal, by the way, is reputed to be very fond of the Lump-sucker's flesh, but objects to this elastic envelope, and is said to peel it off much as we peel oranges.

THE LUMP-SUCKER.

Looking at this fish end on from the front, anyone could tell that it was not built for "scorching" or record-breaking in submarine races; in truth, a vertical section of the Lump would show a close approach in outline to the haystack style of architecture rather than to a clipper-built fish. Instead of sharp prow, gently swelling clean sides, and deep keel, we have large bows, fenders out in the shape of warty ridges to hold the water, a keelless flat bottom like a punt, no air-bladder, and, in fact, every point attended to that is calculated to unfit the Lump for mid-water locomotion, and to condemn it to hasten slowly on the rocky bottom. There his shape, his colour, his wartiness doubtless combine to render him very inconspicuous to his enemies. In the rush of flood-tide, ground-swell, or rollers, he has only to cast anchor by using his extensive and powerful sucker, and he can defy all the motions of the water. Inhabiting rocky places as he does, he would probably be dashed to pieces in storms but for this useful sucker.

The Lump does not carry his adhesive apparatus on his head as does the Remora; with him it is placed on the lower surface just behind the head and between the breast fins. It is, in fact, composed of the throat fins. They form a circular depression bounded by a ring of thick skin. This ring being applied to a stone, and the air pressed out of the centre, the muscles are then contracted, and you have reproduced the London street-boy's leathern disc, with which he lifts loose flagstones and the iron covers of coal-shoots. I have no doubt that with a good-sized Lump-sucker you could lift a small flagstone to which it had adhered; for Pennant tells how he lifted a pail containing

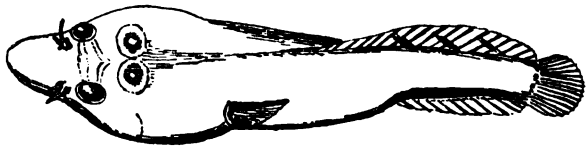
several gallons of water by a Lump which had attached itself to the bottom. He did not take hold of the handle of the pail, but the fleshy tail of the fish!

British fishermen do not seek Lumps, but they often find them in their trammel nets. The Greenlanders are said to make a business of fishing for them, and to salt and dry the flesh for use as food. Couch quotes Holinshed to show that there was a time when it was esteemed in this country: "Lumps are uglie fish to sight, and yet verie delicate in eating, if it be kindlie dressed." I had a notion of eating the specimen that sat for the portrait on page 619, but the Chief Directress of Commissariat in our establishment, prejudiced by the colour and general external appearance of the fish, vetoed the proposal. However, I achieved my end by proxy. A friend who could boast a long list of heterodox dishes he had eaten, cheerfully responded to my suggestion that he should add Lump-flesh to the catalogue. He cooked and ate it, and agreed with Holinshed that it was a delicious dish, adding that the pink flesh tasted like young and tender chicken or like frog's thighs. It is a fine thing to have a friend like that, free from prejudices, upon whom one can make gastronomic experiments. Unfortunately, he is now out of my reach, being engaged in the search for gold at the Klondike, and I hope he will find it in plenty.

SUCKING APPARATUS OF CORNISH SUCKER.

The very young Lump figured has a couple of back fins, but as he grows bigger and older, the first one gets so enveloped in blubber that it is more like a gigantic cock's-comb than a fin. This is the reason why the Scots call the fish "cock-paidle," though I am not sure of the exact equivalent for "paidle" in the English tongue. The female deposits about 100,000 large pink eggs in a sponge-like mass, usually in a hole of the rock, and then appears to have done with the business; but the male has the parental instinct well developed, and he keeps watch and ward over those eggs until they hatch, sending constant currents of water through the mass by the action of his breast fins, and returning again and again when driven away by experimental man. The young Lump, when it leaves the egg, is about one-fifth of an inch long, and it is already provided with the sucking apparatus. This, coupled with the practical character of its first dorsal fin, goes to show that the sucker was acquired by its ancestors before they partially gave up the use of the swimming machinery. The Lump attains to a length of about two feet; the example photographed measured eighteen inches.

My third example of these adhesive fishes presents a striking resemblance to the large brown land-slug. This is known as the Cornish Sucker, not because it is confined to the shores of the delectable duchy, but because it is there plentiful, and was first made known as British from a Cornish specimen. Like the Lump and the smaller suckers to be mentioned later, the Cornish Sucker is devoid of scales and air-bladder. Much of its slug-like appearance is due to its soft exterior, yet more to the peculiar depressed shape of the head. The formation of its sucking organ is similar to that of the Lump, but whereas the Lump maintains an erect attitude, the Cornish Sucker is one of the topsy-turvy creatures that like to spend their lives upside down. If you wish to find this remarkable fish, go at ebb-tide to the edge of the water on a rocky coast, and there look for flat pieces of rock so resting on other stones that they leave a small clear space beneath. Turn the stone quickly, and you may find your Cornish Sucker adhering to what was the lower surface, and watching you with its lively, upturned eyes. Owing to the depression of the fore part of the head, the eyes come nearly to the top, and having free movement, they are for ever twinkling with the appearance of intelligence. In spite of the superficial resemblance of the fish to a slug, this view of the head is very suggestive of that of a dog when he is lying in the attitude



CORNISH SUCKER.

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of watchful repose, with his lower jaw pressed to the ground and his eyes taking note of all that passes. This sucker really spends all his days in this attitude, and if he

MONTAGU'S SUCKER.

changes his position, it is only for a spot a few inches away, or to chase some small crustacean and snap at it with his hound-like jaws, the lower one being narrower than, and overlapped by, the upper. At night he becomes more lively and wanders about a bit; but if one can safely judge his habits in freedom from his behaviour in an aquarium, he returns to his favourite stone before morning. Here the female attaches her large amber-coloured eggs to the stone, and the pair keep watch over them for about four weeks, when they hatch.

Beside the nostrils and a little in front of the eyes are little fleshy threads, evidently sense organs; but the most striking features of the upper surface are the two large eye-like spots behind the real eyes. These spots, which give a fierce aspect to the fish, are purple, with a central point of gleaming blue, and are surrounded by an outer ring of pale brown. The Cornish Sucker is a fish that bears confinement well. I have kept them for months at the time, and they got so far acclimatised that on one occasion I had a promising batch of eggs deposited which I had hoped to rear. One morning, however, only the marks where they had been were visible on the stone. They had been eaten in the night, but by whom was not clear. A small Shanny sharing the same vessel appeared to be particularly well pleased with things in general next morning, and I have a notion that he knew something respecting the fate of those eggs.

We have several other small suckers on our shores which space will not permit me to describe at length. Among them is one called the Sea Snail, because its flesh, in common with that of the other small species, is very soft and mucilaginous, and rapidly disappears on the death of the fish. The Sea Snail is four or five inches in length—about the same as the Cornish Sucker—and is usually coloured with some shade of brown on the upper surface, streaked with waved longitudinal lines of a darker tint. Then there is an allied species called Montagu's Sucker, in compliment to the indefatigable Colonel Montagu, whose researches on the Devon coast in the early days of last century added so many creatures to the list of known British animals. This is of a clear yellow hue, tinged with red on the upper parts. It is found under stones at low water, its favourite attitude being curled round so that the tail and the head are side by side. The face is chubby, and the fore part of the body correspondingly stout to give sufficient breadth for the suckers beneath; but the hinder half is much compressed.

The Two-spotted Sucker is more like the Cornish Sucker in form, with a shorter muzzle, and its eye-like spots are placed on the sides behind the throat fins. Its eyes are very prominent and exceedingly beautiful.

These instances will suffice to show that the power of swimming is not universally developed to anything like its full in all fishes. Evidently the evolution of the sucking disc has taken place in these species in consequence of the absence of an air-bladder and the resulting feebleness of the swimming capacity. Heavy fishes like the Blennies and Gobies, which are mostly without air-bladders, have the habit of climbing vertical rock-faces by the aid of their breast fins, and then clinging for a time by pressing their bodies closely to the rock.

TWO-SPOTTED SUCKER.

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IN THE POWER OF THE BRIGANDS.

By J. P. SETOUN.*

THEY were together, the three of them, the Man, his Wife, and the Other Woman; around them were the great stones of a rocky gorge, through which rushed a small stream shattering itself against the obstacles in its course with an energy that spoke fluently for its power when it should be swelled with winter rains.

The group of men standing a little apart was picturesque enough to satisfy even a childish conception of brigands. The men were loose-limbed, powerful of build, with swarthy countenances, not all grim, and they wore an odd makeshift in the way of raiment that showed brilliant flashes of unexpected colour, revealing the savage love of adornment, even in such an odd quarter.

It was hard to realise that the crisis of three humdrum English lives had arrived in such scenery, with such accessories; yet crisis it was, the crisis of a drama—not, indeed, unprecedented, but rare enough.

The Man and the Other Woman were standing together in silence, and the Wife was seated at a little distance from them on a boulder worn by rain and weather. Not even the drawn whiteness of her face, nor the dishevelled condition of her hair could obscure the fact of her exceeding prettiness. She was small and dainty, with the soft curves and deep-set eyes that have been selected by many generations of men as the most alluring type of femininity. She had cried until she could cry no more, and her physical weakness had for the moment dulled her sense of the crisis and of the awful decision that the other two must face.

The Other Woman presently looked round, and then walked over to her and stood looking down upon her with something like a twinkle in her big, bright, grey eyes. Indeed, if it had not been so pathetic, there would have been something comic in the incongruousness of this dainty little bit of womanhood, dressed as if for a morning's shopping in Regent Street, being here in the wild mountains. Round her neck still hung a gilt chain, with its jewelled blobs of blue stone, and from her waist the little leather reticule, useless anywhere, but absurdly out of place here. The twinkle died away at the misery in the soft, tear-stained face, and the Other Woman spoke very gently. "Don't cry, Cecily. It's all right. You and he are to go on now. When you get back, you'll send the money for me. I don't mind waiting—it's a bit of an adventure."

"Then it's settled that one of you must stay?"

There was no question of *her* staying—she knew that quite well; those two with strong wills would not entertain such a suggestion for a moment, even had she had the strength to make it. Then her face changed. "Bend nearer dear, nearer, so"—her eager little hands clutched the other's shoulders. "I *couldn't* go without him—you understand, don't you? But"—with a kind of despair in her tone—"he'll never let you stay alone, *never!* Oh, I know it! he's hard as a rock."

The Other Woman smiled. "I know him, too. I haven't worked for him six years without learning how to manage him. I'll make that all right."

She rejoined the Man, who was standing with the expressionless face under which an Englishman hides his deepest emotions. He was not handsome, this man, nor attractive, but he was neither a fool nor a youth.

"You are going to take orders from me for once," said the Other Woman in an undertone as she approached him. "Now wait to hear me out. You and Cecie are going back to the town, as those men suggest, and I shall stay here until the money comes."

He made a little sound indicative of contempt for the proposal, but he did not look at her.

She stood close beside him, and there was a strained note of excitement in her voice, in spite of all her effort at self-control. "Look here, be reasonable! If we remain here another few days, Cecie will die—she can't stand it. They won't let us all three go. You and I haven't been comrades so long without understanding one another. One of us must stay—until the ransom comes——"

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"You know what that means?" he asked in a low, deep voice.

"You mean that it will be quite impossible to raise £10,000 in ten days? Well, if it is, at the worst it's a shooting death, the best sort. I have that little revolver you brought; what does it matter? Now or a little later?"

"Don't talk nonsense," he said gruffly.

"It isn't nonsense. Besides, one must do

"'I *couldn't* go without him—you understand, don't you?'"

something," she said, stamping her foot with impatience. "They have given us the choice, but they won't wait for ever, and you stand there—like—oh! like the stump of a tree—and won't say anything."

"Because it's not the least use saying anything. I'm staying here; and the sooner you can get Cecie off and out of sight, the more grateful I shall be to you." His tone was uncompromising.

She realised the terrible task she had to perform and set her wits to work.

"Now listen," she said. "Yes, I know you can; you generally have to do the listening when you are with me. There are three of us—you, and me, and Cecie. She's out of the question—we both acknowledge that; neither of us would dream of leaving her. Remainder, you and me. If you go, the balance of suffering for all concerned is much less. I'll prove it."

"You may save your breath. Do you think for one moment that I should leave you here?"

"I should be in no real danger. These men have their methods, but they are under discipline. Besides, I have the means of safety. I can always shoot myself. I shouldn't really be surprised if, after all, they let me go when the ransom doesn't come."

He shrugged his shoulders. "Well, are you going to start? I can't trust myself to turn round and look at Cecie, or she'll begin crying again. What's she doing?"

"Sitting quietly there praying with her whole soul that I may make you reasonable."

"Reasonable? I? Oh, Heavens!"

"Don't you think I know how hard it would be for you? But you've always been unselfish, and I thought you might, at a time like this, have chosen the more difficult part—have seen further ahead than the immediate and the obvious; but you are just like other men."

There was no answer, and she went on—

"If I go, who suffers? Cecie, first—a widow, perhaps. Can a woman like that fight through the world without a man to help her?"

"She'd marry again," he said quite seriously.

"Possibly—after a year or two; but think what she'd suffer first. Then the children—your boys. Your profession is not a business which you can leave to them. You're making a fairly big income now at the Bar; but it's income which depends on you solely. When Jack and Ned a dozen years hence are beginning life, don't you think it will make some difference to them to have had a first-class education and have

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a father to help them up, rather than to be the sons of a widow by no means well off?"

"They must take their chance."

"And Dolly?"

"She'll forget her daddy, bless her! Look here, you must never tell her how—about this, you know."

She realised that she had made no progress whatever; but she glanced around at the poor, pretty little wife and went on with all the energy she could muster.

"Cecie, Jack, Ned, and Dolly, all victims to your insatiate and incurable vanity. You will not leave me here, for fear of what the world would think. Will the world ever know? Need it?"

He moved uneasily.

"It has nothing to do with that," he said.

"Well, to go on with the catalogue. There is myself. If you persist in staying here, do you think I should ever feel 'glad in the sunlight' any more? I should suffer the most terrible remorse every time I saw Cecie or the children."

"You'd get over it."

"Oh, I'd like to shake you!" she cried suddenly. "We've been comrades so long, you and I, and you've always treated me as an equal—always. It's been give and take in little things, and the first time a larger one comes, you forget all that; you don't give me the measure you would expect yourself, but thrust me into the conventional position women are supposed to occupy; you deny me feelings or the right to choose; your comradeship was only skin deep; your conventionality is inherent. Look at me—look at me straight, and tell me then if you don't believe that I am arguing honestly, that I mean what I say, that every word is sincere."

"I believe you," he said, and the tone gave her a spark of hope.

"Then you will allow the truth of my words. So many belong to you, so many are dependent on you, and there is no one for me—no one, at least, to whom I am essential. Of course, my brothers and sisters will be sorry, but they have others; they are married; their lives are not bound up with mine. I am not the centre of anyone's life."

Then he said a thing which startled her, which sent the blood in a shock to her heart and afterwards set it racing in her veins; for he said very quietly and gently, as if it were something quite matter-of-fact, but rather pathetic: "Don't you know yet that you are the centre of my life?"

"You mean it? You really mean it?" she said, without altering her position or raising her voice by one semitone. "Then, dearest, I give you credit for the power of loving at least as much as I do; and if it were you who were asking me to do anything, however hard, how gladly would I do it! Don't think I misunderstand, but give me credit for being able to enter into your very mind. The thing I asked I thought hard, and I had no claim on you to ask it. As I ask it now, it is far, far harder—it is the acutest torture I can inflict upon you; but I do demand it in confidence, for I *have* a claim. Your love is mine, my love is yours. By that right, I tell you, you must go back to the world, live straight, comfort Cecie, help your children, and not heed what the world says. What you have told me now has made it quite impossible to do otherwise. Could I go back to live the dreary life, knowing that I had made her widowed, the children fatherless, and that I had no right even to sympathise with them or to look them in the face, for I had robbed them? Knowing that they would spurn me if they knew what I had stolen, though I had tried so hard not to? On the other hand, if you leave me here, you leave me happier than I have ever been in my life. Under no other circumstances would it have been possible to own what I have just owned; and the joy and gladness of being able to say it to you, of breaking down that barrier that has stood between us, or which we always pretended was there, is so great that I can only think I am dreaming. Dearest, I ask you, do you believe me?"

"I believe you," he said for the second time that day; but this time his voice trembled.

"Then you will go? See! she knows her cause is won. She is coming towards us. Turn! look at her."

His lips quivered. He turned and looked, not at the little wife stumbling towards him among the rough stones, her face lit up with sudden hope, but at the Other Woman. And as his eyes met hers, she saw the agony in them, and the thick sweat drops which all unconsciously he brushed away with the back of his hand; the sudden workings of his usually impassive features told her of the torture that he, a man of few words, could never express.

"I can't!" he said. Then Cecie, with a final stumble, caught his arm and clung to

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"'One of us must stay—until the ransom comes —'"

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him, and the yellow evening sun, striking down the valley, made the hope more brilliant in her exquisite little face.

The Other Woman looked at the two, and a quiver ran through her, but she kept her own features straight by a tremendous effort. Then she stooped and kissed Cecie and walked quickly back to the shelter of the hillside; but her eyes were blinded by tears which she had to wipe away before she could see him once more, as he lifted the little wife on to the back of the rough horse that stood waiting, and seizing the bridle led it down to the little group of waiting brigands.

Then she bowed herself down in the extremity of her pain and moaned her plaint: "Oh, *how* I have hurt him! *how* I have hurt him! Pray God he may soon forget!"

HOW DID YOU DIE?

DID you tackle that trouble that came your way
With a resolute heart and cheerful?
Or hide your face from the light of day
With a craven soul and fearful?
Oh! a trouble's a ton, or a trouble's an ounce,
Or a trouble is what you make it,
And it isn't the fact that you're hurt that counts,
But only—How did you take it?

You are beaten to earth? Well, well, what's that?
Come up with a smiling face.
It's nothing against you to fall down flat,
But to lie there—that's disgrace.
The harder you're thrown, why, the higher you bounce;
Be proud of your blackened eye!
It isn't the fact that you're licked that counts;
It's—How did you fight—and why?

And though you be done to the death, what then?
If you battled the best you could,
If you played your part in the world of men,
Why, The Critic will call it good.
Death comes with a crawl, or comes with a pounce,
And whether he's slow or spry,
It isn't the fact that you're dead that counts,
But only—How did you die?

EDMUND VANCE COOKE.

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THE TRAIL OF THE DEAD:

THE STRANGE EXPERIENCE OF DR. ROBERT HARLAND.

By B. FLETCHER ROBINSON and J. MALCOLM FRASER.*

V.—THE AMMONIA CYLINDER.

THE sail crept forward down the river of sunset gold that streamed in wild splendour from a crevass in the ranges of cloudland. The light that burnished the sea glowed upon the Polleven cliffs, tinging with fire the breakers at their feet; it threw fierce shadows amongst the clustered cottages of the Cornish fisherfolk, and painted a richer scarlet on the sails of the trawlers huddled beneath the sheltering arm of the little quay. It was a scene that rises before me, as I write, with a curious detail, though, indeed, at the time I took no pains to observe it. For on that departing vessel was he whom we had chased across Europe, madman as we supposed, murderer as we knew him to be. We had saved an innocent girl from his vendetta, and in my heart I thanked Providence for that mercy; but Rudolf Marnac, the Heidelberg professor, was still free, free with fresh schemes of vengeance against his scientific opponents hatching in his twisted brain, and with all the wisdom of his great learning to help him in his deadly purposes.

"So this is the end of your clever plans!" I cried, turning savagely on my burly cousin. "He has escaped again, got clear away. What are you going to do? Shall we follow him?"

"In the face of the storm?"

"Why not—if that is the best you can suggest?"

"You have changed, my little cousin," said he, regarding me with a kindly look, though, indeed, my words had been unmannerly. "The Fates have played the very deuce with the sedate student that I dragged out of his pleasant rooms at Heidelberg just twelve days ago. How that youngster grumbled at prospective discomforts! How he shrank from the thought of being mixed up in a business that was 'better left to the police'! Do you remember?"

"Don't we waste time?" said I.

"Perhaps. Ah! here she comes—just the thing for which I was hoping."

Running down the village street came Miss Weston, with three or four men behind her. We met her at the entrance to the quay.

"Well! have you caught him?" she panted.

"No; there he goes." My cousin pointed an arm at the distant sail.

"Oh, thank God!" she exclaimed earnestly. "I knew he was armed, and I was so afraid for the brave men who had saved my father and me."

She looked from one to the other of us with an honest gratitude in her eyes that to me seemed worth the risk of all the dangers in the world.

"And Dr. Weston?" asked my cousin.

"My father is no worse; but of course I did not tell him all. He imagines that I was annoyed by some tramp, and declares he will have a man about the cottage in future. You and your friend must come back with me, Sir Henry. I want to introduce you to him."

"Some other time, I hope. At present this young firebrand here insists that we should follow Marnac by sea."

"That is quite impossible, sir," she said, turning upon me with an anxious look. "I have enough experience of the weather to know that a storm is coming. I am certain that Sir Henry Graden will help me to dissuade you."

"I am afraid not, Miss Weston," broke in my cousin before I could reply. "We have been like over-eager hounds, losing the scent by flashing forward too quickly. It must be sheer, dogged hunting now, and no more cutting off corners. By the way, there is a fact which perhaps one of you can tell me," he said, turning to the little group that hung behind her skirts watching us with a bucolic interest. "Did the *Agnes Jane* yonder carry provisions on board?"

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"Surely, zur," said one who stood a little forward of the rest—a stout, bearded man with a face as brown and seamed as a withered cider-apple. "Mark Pennyfold, as is owner, was telling about this furrin gent only last night down tu the 'Plough Inn.' 'E allowed 'im to be a funny zort of toad, vur 'e 'ad 'is orders to keep a week's vittles on board, though the reason was passin' his onderstanding."

"Would Pennyfold take a trip to France if he were asked?"

"Surely, zur, ef 'e be paid accordin'. 'E be most mazed on the colour of a bit of gold is Mark."

"That settles it, Miss Weston," continued Graden in his short, businesslike way. "Now please to remember my instructions. You have the facts concerning Professor Marnac in my letter. Lay an information against him for an attempt on your life, and see that the county authorities circulate his description along the coast. I don't think there is the slightest chance that he will return to trouble you, but be on your guard, and have a man to sleep in the house. Now, my lads, who has the swiftest boat in the harbour?"

"Now you be askin' a question," said their spokesman gloomily. "You zee, it be this wise. At the regatty, as my *Pride o' Cornwall* was reaching for the west buoy, there comes, all of a sudden like, a girt wind from over the eastern beacon which——"

"He means, Sir Henry, that his boat is reckoned the fastest, but at the regatta she was disabled by a squall," broke in Miss Weston, interrupting a story which was evidently familiar in its length and detail. "This is Sir Henry Graden, Isaac Treherne, and he is trying to capture the wicked man in the *Agnes Jane* yonder, the man who, as I told you, tried to kill me. Will you take him in the *Pride of Cornwall?*"

Isaac was a study of indecision. He twisted up his mouth, scratched his head, regarded the sunset attentively, and kicked a pebble over the edge of the quay.

"I du wish, miss, as I 'ad been nigh you when 'e tried it," he said at last. "I would 'ave set about the hugly toad proper, that I would. But, beggin' your pardin, and seein' he be got away, 'twould seem a matter for the perlice mor'n for we uns. Moreover, there be the fish contract, and the *Pride* is only waiting her crew to zail."

"It means a hundred pound in your pocket, my man," snapped Graden.

"A 'undred pounds is a 'undred pounds," replied Isaac with a sententious inconsequence.

"But, Isaac," broke in Miss Weston, "when the story gets round to Mark Pennyfold, he will say that you refused because you knew that the *Pride* could never catch the *Agnes Jane*."

"Zo he wull—the liard!" cried Isaac, with a sudden burst of indignation. "I never thought on that, miss. A pretty tale he will be telling in every public from Bude to Penzance! Come along, gentlemen, come along. I'll show 'e a thing, and Mark, tu, the liard!"

We ran to where the little trawler lay moored to the quay, and tumbled on board. One man was sitting in her stern mending some tackle, and Isaac apparently considered his services sufficient, for he cast off the ropes at once. Miss Weston was waiting on the head of the quay as our boat crept by. I shall always remember that picture of my darling as she stood on those old grey stones, with their seaweed beard dropping to the swirl of the tide below. The fire of the sunset lit her tall, graceful figure leaning to the breeze. One hand was to her hair, the other waving us adieu. No fairer figure of encouragement could men desire who started on a perilous adventure.

"Good-bye! God keep you both!" So she cried to us.

We shouted a reply, but I doubt if she heard it, for at that moment the wind caught the great red sail on our foremast, swinging it across with a thunderous flapping that shook the little vessel from stem to stern. In another moment we were rushing forward in pursuit, with the spray from the bows in our faces and a white trail of foam marking our path from the land.

I do not think that more than ten minutes had passed from the moment of our arrival on the quay, though by my writing it may seem that I have underestimated the time. The *Agnes Jane* was, as far as I could judge, about a mile away to the southward, a distance which we decreased to barely a thousand yards before the full strength of the growing wind we brought had reached her. After that, however, we gained very slowly, if at all.

I was never a good sailor, a fact which the long rollers soon recalled to my remembrance. The occasional bursts of spray which flew over us added greatly to my discomfort, for my clothes, though warm, were not waterproof. I have always been susceptible to chills, and the prospect of passing the night in dripping garments

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seriously alarmed me. It was, therefore, with a sense of great relief that I observed Isaac produce some spare oilskins, and boots happily lined with flannel.

The seafaring appearance which I assumed did not, however, allay my internal sufferings, which soon became acute. Huddled on the leeward side of the boat, I watched the chase with an appearance of interest which was mere hypocrisy. To be sincere, I regarded my cousin, who was enjoying a pipe

"'Good-bye! God keep you both!' So she cried to us."

of strong-smelling tobacco on the windward side of me, with a more immediate enmity than I felt towards Marnac himself.

The sun sank amidst a cloud conflagration of sullen and thunderous magnificence. The coastline behind us darkened and faded until the crests of the breaking waves rose ghastly white against the gloom of the shrouded land. But fortunately the sky above us was still clear, and a silver crescent of the moon, swinging at an angle as if the wind had tilted her, showed us the chase heading southward. It was evidently some port in France for which she pointed. My cousin had joined Isaac, who was at the tiller, and the pair conversed in low tones, glancing frequently to the north-west, from which the wind blew strong and cold.

It was, according to my remembrance, past nine o'clock that the steady pressure of the wind failed. In its place came gusts, fierce and uncertain, spaced with lulls of restless calm. Ignorant as I was of sea weather, I began to grow uneasy. There seemed a menace in the dark, mysterious wall of cloud to windward, a rampart edged with silver from the moon. Motionless it hung like a heavy curtain that at its rising would reveal some monstrous spectacle. For the first time I realised the insignificance of our boat, its loneliness amidst the hurrying wastes of the sea, and my anxiety passed into alarm. It was about this time that my nausea suddenly left me. This was a great relief to me, for I was well aware that an excess of sea-sickness may result in a serious prostration.

It was in one of the lulls I have mentioned that Isaac gave my cousin the helm and with his man's assistance lowered the sail on the smaller mast at the stern which, I believe, is known nautically as the jigger. They also reefed the larger canvas on the foremast. The *Agnes Jane*, which was now not more than four hundred yards away, showed no sign of following our example.

"Mark Pennyfold must be mazed," said Isaac, on his return aft. "'E must have zeen us were chasin' 'e, yet 'e gives we no chance o' speaking 'im; and now 'e be chancing his boat by carrying on with that press o' zail. Plaze to keep thy hand on the tiller, zur."

The little Cornishman rolled forward to where I sat, and stood, making a hollow of his hands. A great stillness held the sea and air, save for the whisper of the gliding waves.

"The *Agnes Jane*, ahoy!"

He drove the words over the black waters like the blast of a trumpet.

"The *Agnes Jane*, ahoy!"

Again he called, and this time there came an answering voice.

"Help!" it cried—the one word—and was silent. We waited, but that was all.

"It is no good, Treherne," said my cousin. "They have an ugly customer on board who does not mean to be taken. He has his pistol at their heads as like as not. They must take their chance of——"

His words were lost in a stirring note

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like the throbbing of a giant harp-string, a note that rose to a shriek and then melted into a rattling, drumming roar, the uttermost diapason of the storm-wind. For some seconds we heeled over, so that I could have dipped my face in the bubbling waters; and then, slowly gathering way, we shot forward through the flying spray, with Treherne yelling to his man in tones that even outsounded the squall itself.

We were upon her almost before I realised the disaster that had befallen her. I caught a glimpse of the level lines of timbers about the keel, the red sails awash in streaks of hissing foam; and then I saw my cousin lean out and grip a something in the water. For a moment I thought he would be dragged from the boat, but Isaac, letting go the tiller, circled his legs with a pair of muscular arms and held on like the little bulldog he was. With three great heaves Graden lugged the dripping thing he held to the boat's edge; with a fourth he landed it fairly on board. The *Agnes Jane* had gone, and with her the unfortunate men she carried—save Marnac only.

Thus Fate in its own strange manner had given him to us at last!

Shouting like a madman, I started towards the stern, where my cousin was bending over the huddled body he had saved. But even as I did so I saw a black mass, crested and streaked with hissing white, rush up from the obscurity to windward. For a space it seemed to hang above us, while Isaac yelled as he tugged wildly at the tiller. Then, with a wild roar that drummed in my ears like the explosion of a mine, it threw itself upon us, hurling me into the bottom of the boat, choked, deafened, and blinded.

I do not know how we lived through that first furious hour. Isaac Treherne made no second mistake, but crouched at the tiller, tricking the succession of great seas that swung upon us out of the throbbing blackness. Stung by passing hailstorms, drenched to the skin, and aching with cold, I toiled with a tin pannikin, baling, baling until my back creaked with stiffness and my hands could scarce feel the handle. Graden and the sailor worked beside me, so that we managed to keep the water under. Now and again a slit in the rushing dark above us showed me Marnac lying by the steersman's side. Was he alive or dead? I did not know, nor did I stay my labour to make inquiry.

The daylight came at last, the God-given light for which all poor mariners must pray in their hours of danger. With it came a lessening of the wind and a falling sea. Yet there had been an angry menace in the brilliant colours that lit the eastern sky, and I stared eagerly over the muddy green of the hurrying surges. Indeed, I was the first to see a steamer's smudge of smoke on the western skyline.

"Her be making for we, gentlemen," remarked our steersman, after a long stare at the distant vessel. "Happen her would take 'e aboard, if you be so minded. The weather be blowing up again, and it's a long reach back to Polleven."

"I don't like deserting the ship, Isaac," said Graden; "though, to tell the truth, I don't relish another day in the chops of the Channel."

"Bain't no desartion, sir. Me and Jake can take her whoam; and, to tell 'e the truth, her'll ride the lighter for the want of him!"

He pointed to where Marnac sat crouching under an oilskin coat. Save for occasional shivers, the old man seemed to be no worse for his handshake with Death. He received the sailor's remark with a benevolent smile. "Doan't 'e go grinning at me, you wicked-minded old toad!" cried Isaac. "'Twas only through special mercies that Providence forgot you was on board. We'd ha' been sunk for zarten, else."

Within half an hour we could see the steamer clearly, an ancient tramp of the seas, bluff in the bows, square in the flank, with a colouring of soot and rusty iron. She answered our signals with a melancholy toot and stood towards us. Graden, who had been watching her approach at my side, turned and walked aft.

"I have already dropped your revolver overboard, Professor Marnac," he said; "but I must trouble you to hand me your pocket-book. Money, you know, is often the most valuable of weapons."

The Professor obeyed with a gentle cluck of amusement.

"I trust, Sir Henry, that the notes are not damaged," he said in the low, musical tones with which I was so familiar. "Indeed, I was assured that the case was waterproof."

"Now your loose gold, if you please."

"Here it is, Sir Henry, with my watch and chain. Observe that my pockets are now completely empty. Ah, Mr. Harland! forgive me if I did not notice you before. I fear that these nautical adventures will interrupt your course of studies. Did you hear whom the University have appointed in my

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place? I should be sorry if my students, amongst whom I always held you to be the most studious, if not the most able, should be long without a lecturer—like sheep that have lost their shepherd, Mr. Harland."

I turned from him with a feeling of nausea. Mad or sane, he had done such deeds as placed him beyond the intercourse of humanity.

"I saw my cousin lean out and grip a something in the water."

The steamer was close upon us now, and as she came rolling down the heave of the swell we were hailed from the bridge in a tongue that was strange to me. Before we could reply, a seaman had sprung to the bulwarks and sent the coils of a line spinning over us. This Isaac made fast, allowing a fair space to intervene between his little craft and the rusty metal fabric that towered above us.

"Good-bye, Isaac," said Graden, shaking the little Cornishman warmly by the hand. "I will see to your cheque the moment I get to London."

"Doan't 'e mention it, zur. I was right proud to take 'e. Nor do 'e trouble about we uns. Jake and I will be making Poll-even by midnight at latest—please be."

It was an anxious scramble—they had to swing out a chair for Marnac—but the trawler was as handy as a row-boat, and at last the three of us stood on the deck of the stranger. A more ill-assorted trio of bedraggled voyagers never ranged in line.

But if we were strange to look upon, so were the group of men who confronted us. They were of the degenerate Latin breed, dark, small, uncertain in temper, and dirty by nature and training. Their seafaring dress seemed as ill-suited to them as a sash and a coloured cloak would be to a British shellback.

"Eengleshe?" asked one whom I took to be the mate. "Eengleshe? What say?"

"We are Englishmen who were driven out to sea by last night's storm. If I may see the captain, I will explain," said my cousin.

The man grinned his lack of comprehension. Plainly his vocabulary was of the smallest.

"These men are Portuguese, Sir Henry," said Marnac, stepping quickly forward. "I know their language. Allow me to explain the situation."

But he got no further. My cousin's long arm shot out, gripping his collar firmly from behind. With a gentle heave, he swung the Professor from his feet and dropped him behind us.

"Please to keep silence, Professor Marnac. Your explanations might be somewhat biassed," said he, with a grim smile. And

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then turning to the sailors, who had been watching the little scene with evident surprise—

"Do none of you speak English?" he asked.

They seemed to understand the question, for some talk, eked out by much gesticulation, ended in one of their number trotting up the ladder to the bridge,* where he disappeared into the wheel-house. An instant later a long, red-headed man emerged and came running towards us.

"And shure wud Oi not have greeted yer honours before now," he exclaimed in the most strenuous of brogues; "but 'twas me trick at the wheel, and niver a wan of these spalpeens wud relieve me. An' what can Oi do fer ye now at all?"

"What boat is this?"

"The Portugaise ship, San Joseph, fr'm Buenos Ayres to Hamburg wid a mixed cargo, and a darned mixed crew, sorr. If it hadn't been fer a back answer whin the wine was in me, faith! it's not on this greasy flat-ir-ron that Tim Blake wud be after serving."

"Do you speak the language, my man?"

"Indade an' Oi do, sorr; an' good raison, seeing that 'tis fower years come Christmas that Oi've been steward on th' yacht iv wan iv tha' Portugaise nobility."

"That's good news. And now where is the captain?"

"Faith! but 'twas a jool iv a toime we were after havin' in the Bay last night, sorr, an' the old man's turned in. The second mate has gone aft, gatherin' his courage in both hands fer to wake him. Indade, sorr, 'tis a r-resolution that wud put the fear iv the Lord into a better man than him."

"Rather a Tartar, eh?"

"A strong man, sorr, an' a good seaman fer a greaser, though his temper is most pro-digious. But see, here he comes, like a dook out iv a theatre."

He was indeed a fine figure of a man, fully six feet in height and proportionately broad. His skin was very dark, and his eyes of the deep blackness that I have since observed in Indian races, but very soft and glowing. His hair, which he wore at a greater length than is customary amongst sailors, showed under his cap in glossy curls: and his moustache was twisted back almost to his ears.

He bowed to us with a deliberate courtesy, muttering a greeting in his own tongue. He spoke no English, and it was through the medium of Tim Blake that he offered us hospitality. It was no time for explanations, so, guarding Marnac between us, we hurried down to a large cabin where warm garments and steaming glasses of hot brandy-and-water were brought by the worthy Irishman, to whose care we had been assigned. As far as could be judged, I had not contracted so much as a cold in the head, despite my long exposure. When we had completed our change of clothes, my cousin beckoned me outside the cabin, closing the door on our prisoner.

"I have asked Blake to take me to the captain, for it is right that he should know the true position of affairs," he whispered. "While I am gone, you must sit with Marnac. Remember, do not let him out of your sight for a moment."

"Very well," I said, and he strode off down the dark alley of the passage-way.

When I re-entered the cabin, I found Marnac muffled to the chin, under the blankets of a bunk. He gave me one of his quick, evil glances, that was unpleasantly reminiscent of an aged rat surprised in an iron gin. I had so great a horror and detestation of the man that his mere presence was a source of physical discomfort to me; and when, sitting up amongst his wraps, he commenced to pester me with questions, I could endure it no longer. I retired outside the cabin, seating myself with my back to the door. I was as well there, I argued, as in the interior, and in a position infinitely more satisfactory to myself.

The garments they had lent me were thick and warm; the dose of brandy had been considerable. I was weary from the toil of a sleepless night. Those are my excuses for the fact that in the course of the next five minutes I fell soundly asleep.

It was Graden who woke me, a very angry and exasperated Graden who shook my senses into me with unnecessary violence. I started up, protesting against his treatment.

"I thought better of you than this," he said, with his hand still fixed in my collar.

"My back was against the door. He could not pass without waking me. What does it matter?" I grumbled, with every sign of irritation.

"I told you to watch him, to stay inside the cabin, and I find you snoring here. No more excuses, please. You know the ability of the man. Let us hope he has not taken advantage of any chances you gave him."

He opened the door cautiously, peeped in, and then flung it wide with a great oath. The cabin was empty!

Yet there was no doubt as to his manner

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"'Tis fower years come Christmas that Oi've been steward on th' yacht.'"

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of escape. In the middle of the flooring there gaped a hole, with a heavy square of wood lying beside it. On examination, we found that this entrance had also been barred by a grating, which now swung downwards on its hinges, disclosing a wooden ladder, the foot of which was indistinguishable in the gloom below.

"He is in the hold!" I cried. "He is hiding somewhere amongst the cargo! We shall never find him without the help of the crew."

Amongst the excellent points in my cousin's character was that of perfect self-control. There was no anger in his voice to remind me of my blunder when he spoke again.

"It's not the hold, cousin Robert," he said. "This is the ship's *lazarette*, where the food is stored. There are usually two entrances, each similar to this. If he has escaped by the second, it's a bad business. It will mean he has found a friend, for these gratings should be secured. But it may be that he is lurking amongst the pork and the biscuits. If so, we ought to find him easily enough. I don't want to bring the crew into this affair if I can help it. It will be enough if the captain knows."

"But he does—you have told him."

"That's the blackest part of the luck. The ship caught it pretty badly last night; they were right in the thick of it. I found the captain on deck superintending three or four sailors who were clearing away the wreckage of one of the boats. He was in an amazing temper, and Blake advised me that if I had a favour to ask him, I had best let him cool off a bit. So I dismissed the Irishman and climbed up to the bridge. I should think I'd been there about twenty minutes watching the work, when I saw a sharp-looking lad pop out from the companion and go over to where the captain was standing. They had a fine pow-wow together, looking up at me from time to time. It rather puzzled me, and presently I dropped down the stairs and walked over to where they were. The captain seemed decidedly chilly, and I soon saw by his manner that he was not wanting a talk just then. Whereupon I came below. So kindly light the lamp I see in the bracket yonder, cousin Robert, and we'll go hunting again."

We descended the ladder, Graden going first, and I following with the lamp, the light of which I endeavoured to throw over his shoulder.

It seems a cowardly thing to confess, writing as I am in the broad daylight, with the bees amongst the flower-beds singing their song through the open window, but though we were two to one, and our quarry an old man, my cousin had twice to rate me for the deliberation of my movements. We peered about amongst the lurking shadows, with the thunder of the seas hammering on the iron sides without. Now and again a heave of the ship would send us staggering apart, to bring up amongst unexpected barrels. Perhaps it was the want of sleep that had jangled my nerves, but I knew in my heart that if I were suddenly to catch a sight of those wicked eyes staring out from the gloom before us, I should shriek and run like a hysterical schoolgirl.

But Marnac was not there. The grate of the second stairway was closed and locked, and yet he had disappeared. Someone had helped him—that was plain enough. We stood disconsolate amongst the details of the ship's larder.

"Well, he's gone right enough," said my cousin. "Hallo! what the deuce is this?"

He took the light from my hand and stooped to examine something at his feet. It was a steel cylinder, about eight feet in length; a second lay beside it.

"Ammonia! So they run a cold storage on board."

"How do you know that?" I asked.

"My dear cousin, if you can't remember the part that ammonia plays in the manufacture of ice, I shall not attempt to—hallo! stop that—stop that, I say!"

He sprang forward, caught his foot in an empty sack, and fell heavily, extinguishing the lamp. As he did so, I saw an arm reach down and draw up the grating through which we had descended. A key clicked in the padlock. Graden was on his feet in an instant, and together we rushed to the foot of the ladder.

In the patch of grey daylight above us we could see the face of the captain looking through the bars, and peeping down beside him, with the sweetest dimple of an old man's smile upon his lips, was Professor Marnac!

There was a pause, filled with much whispered talk from above. Then the red head of our friend Tim Blake came thrusting into the picture. He seemed much distressed at the situation.

"Faith! but 'tis not Oi that knows fwhat to belaive," said he; "but the skipper here will have it that yer-re a pair iv desprite and revolting characters. Oi am also to tell ye, gintlemen, that ye've the very divil's

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own choice of ut. Eyther ye will let me r-run through yere pockuts wid me practised hand, upon which ye may come up an' make us acquainted wid yere gineral defence, or, if ye refuse, be jabbers! but they'll clap on the hatches an' lave ye in the dark."

"Tell the skipper, Blake," said my cousin, "that he has been grossly deceived, for we are law-abiding English gentlemen. Nevertheless, if he will keep to his terms and hear our case out, we consent to being searched."

The Irishman vanished, and again came the murmur of voices. Then he reappeared, unlocking the grating and descending the ladder. At the edge of the hole I could see the faces of several members of the crew, and caught the gleam of drawn knives. Evidently they did not trust us.

When it was over, we followed Blake up the ladder and waited quietly while he laid out Graden's revolver and our few belongings on the flap of a central table behind which the captain was standing. A short speech by that worthy, and the Irishman began again.

"The skipper wud have ye know," he said, addressing Graden with a growing dignity that would have been comic enough at a less unfortunate moment, "that ye stand accused iv carrying off the ould gint yonder and committin' burglary on his person. Fwhat do ye say to that, sorr?"

"It is absolutely untrue."

"Wan for him, thin. But Oi'm to ask ye how ye account fer th' possession iv that pocket-book the skipper is holding so loving in his hand. He says that there's close on five hundred pounds in ut. Is ut yours?"

"No—it belongs to the old gentleman."

"The divil it does! Then how did ye come by ut?"

I feel certain that if my cousin could have told his story directly to the captain, the honesty of his manner and the simplicity of his narration would have had effect. But this pleading at second-hand was a sorry business. From his long pauses and facial contortions I soon gathered that Blake was not the linguist that he claimed to be. Indeed, the version which the captain received from him must have been something astounding. The tale was scarcely concluded when the captain raised his hand, and the flounderings of the interpreter ceased abruptly.

Thus was his decision translated. He would touch at Southampton, where the case could be fought out in the English courts. In the meanwhile, as the evidence was overwhelmingly against us, we should be placed in irons and confined in the cabin where we then were.

He was a just man. Angry though I was at the time, I have come to think he did the right thing. The harmless appearance of Marnac, his ability to plead his cause, our obvious endeavour to keep him from communicating with the crew, our possession of so valuable a pocket-book belonging to him—no, we cannot blame the captain if he decided in his favour.

To attempt resistance would have been absurd. The men about us carried knives, and the butt of a heavy revolver showed warningly from the captain's pocket. For the first time in either of our lives the handcuffs snapped at our wrists. They moved out one by one; the door was closed and barred upon us. In another three minutes we were both sound asleep. Our ill-fortune, the doings of our most dangerous enemy, the irons at our wrists—we forgot them all in the dead, still sleep that Nature grants to the very weary.

It was Blake who woke us with our mid-day meal. He was in his most talkative mood. Guilty or innocent, it made small difference to him, after he had decided upon the fact of our gentility. He was agog with the manner of Marnac's escape from us. The lad who was servant to the captain had been down in the *lazarette*, and from pure curiosity had poked up the trap in the cabin floor. With promises of money, Marnac had persuaded the youngster to guide him to the captain. In their haste they had forgotten to close the trap and grating behind them, though they had secured those at the head of the second ladder. Marnac had waited in the captain's room while the lad went forward to find his master. It was doubtless their interview that Graden had observed from the bridge. When the supposed victim of our plot had told his story, they had armed themselves and come to arrest us, calling the Irishman and two more of the crew in case of resistance. They had found us below—a source of delight to the Portuguese sailors, who had a healthy terror of Englishmen; and the rest we already knew.

"Come, my man," said my cousin after he had concluded, "for yourself, now—do you believe us guilty?"

"Faith, sorr, 'tis a quare business entoirely," he answered, scratching his red pole indecisively. "For whether 'tis you or the ould

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gintleman that they'll lay by the heels in Southampton Water, it's not fer me to be after saying. Sure 'tis wan of the two—which is all Oi knows."

"Now listen to me, Tim Blake," said my cousin. "My name is, as I told you, Sir Henry Graden, and I am a rich man. I am not asking you to neglect your duty, which is to keep us in; but if you will have an eye to the door so as to keep that old gentleman out, there'll be five-and-twenty pounds in your pocket."

Whatever the Irishman may have thought of our characters, there was no doubt as to his belief in the genuine nature of the offer. He beamed upon us with a childlike jubilation that was quite comic in its enthusiasm.

"Indade, sorr, indade, and I will!" he cried.

"Have you the key?"

"I have, sorr. Wud your honour like to kape it! You can turn the lock whin I knock fower times."

"That will hardly do," said my cousin, laughing. "We might have the captain visiting us, which would mean a change of gaolers. Now as to the trap-door—is that also secured?"

"The lad we spoke of—he has the kay, sorr. May the divil seize him!"

"We can't leave it like that. See if you can fix it up to better advantage."

Blake raised the outer block of wood which fitted level with the flooring, and inspected the grating below. It was secured by a padlock—a precaution necessary enough, for honesty is not the prevailing characteristic of a Portuguese crew. After a moment's thought, he drew from his pocket a handful of assorted rubbish from which he extracted a large nail. Graden's boot served as a hammer, and with this he drove it into the key-hole.

"'Twill hould it foine!" cried he, regarding his work with exultation.

And so, with fresh assurances of watchfulness, he left us.

The wind rose again that afternoon, and by four o'clock it was blowing very hard. The seas drove against the sides of the old ship in thunderous murmurs; now and again they sprang the bulwarks, crashing down upon the deck above us and shaking the iron fabric in convulsive tremors. In the confined cabin my nausea again visited me. Enough that I was supremely miserable.

At six, Blake had brought us a supper. His presence irritated me; and when he pressed food upon me, I spoke my mind strongly on the lamentable want of tact general amongst sailors. He gave us the comfortable news, however, that we were expected to reach Southampton by three next morning.

The night crawled on. Blake had helped us into bunks and covered us with rugs. I found the handcuffs of small inconvenience. I could hear Graden snoring. For myself, I could not get to sleep, but lay in the lowest misery, staring at the opposite partition, that rose and fell at the ship's rollings with a sickening regularity. Just before midnight, the lamp—that had probably been injured when Graden fell in the *lazarette*—smoked, stank, and expired. I was too unwell to care, except for the smell.

Yet it was the darkness which saved our lives.

It was about half an hour later that I first noticed it—a faint ray of illumination winking in the centre of the cabin floor. At first I imagined that the nausea had affected my eyes, and so peered into the black of the night, rubbing them impatiently. But the rays steadied and, if anything, increased in volume. It was a ghostly thing to witness, this white knife-edge of light stabbing up from the solid planking without cause or explanation. I was about to shout to Graden when I remembered the trap-door. Someone was below in the *lazarette!*

For some moments I remained staring at the crevice through which the rays passed up to me. After all, it might be some member of the crew; but if not—if it were Marnac! What then? He was an old man; he could not force the grating, even if he had obtained the key. We had seen to that.

I do not pretend to say that I was unafraid. There were devilish possibilities in a hatred such as that in which the mad Professor held us. Yet after a while my curiosity overcame my fear, just as my fear had put aside my sickness. I rolled from my bunk—noisily enough, I dare say, but all sound was dulled by the turmoil without. The pitching of the vessel made it impossible for me to stand, so I crawled forward to where the edge of the trap was outlined. I felt for and found the ring, gripped it with my teeth, and slowly, for the irons hampered my balance, raised the edge. Then with my hands I thrust the edge of the boot, which I had removed for that purpose, into the crack. Flat on my face, I peeped below.

It was indeed Marnac. The light of a

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ship's lantern, jammed between two barrels, drew streaks of silver from his white hair as he bent to his labour. Seated astride one of the steel cylinders that we had noticed, he was unscrewing the last of the nuts which secured its iron cap. What he intended I had no idea.

He was fingering the nut which the spanner had loosened, when I saw a face creep out of the shadow behind him. It was the captain's boy. With infinite caution he moved forward, with a blending of alarm and curiosity in his manner that showed he was not a party to what was proceeding. Probably the key to the *lazarette* had been purloined from him, and he had discovered its loss. When scarcely two yards from Marnac, the lurch of the ship threw him from his balance. As he stumbled forward, Marnac spun round with a scream of the most violent passion. Swinging the heavy spanner, he brought it down upon the bent head with a scrunching blow. The lad dropped upon the floor face downwards; nor did he try to rise again.

"Marnac spun round with a scream of the most violent passion."

"Murderer!" I cried down upon him, in horror at so fearful a spectacle.

Marnac dropped his weapon and started back, his fingers twitching, his eyes searching wildly round for a sight of his accuser. Yet when, at last, he saw my face above him, he drew himself together without a sign of trepidation for his discovered crime—save that the hand with which he gripped the stairs still shook slightly.

"Ach! but it is you," he whispered up. "For a moment I thought—but it was the folly of a child. And so, Mr. Harland, you come again to trouble me. Well, it is for the last time—mark you that—for the very last time."

He sat himself across the cylinder. As he did so, I felt a hand upon my shoulder and knew that Graden was awake.

"You might have spared that lad," he said very quietly.

Marnac looked up with one of the beast-like glances that showed the disordered brain.

"It was a necessity," he said. "He would have prevented my act of justice upon you—upon you who have tried so hard to hinder me in my revenge upon my enemies who are also the enemies of science. Do you understand what I am about?"

"Perhaps," answered my cousin grimly, and at the word he jerked away my boot, letting the trap fall into its place.

"To the door, Robert," he whispered. "To the door and shout for help, or it is all over with us. He must have noticed the ammonia cylinder this afternoon. If he turns the tap, that stuff will choke the life out of us. The gas is under immense pressure and will pour up into this den

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like water from a fire-hose. Run, man, run!"

I staggered across the heaving cabin to the door and dropped upon my knees, hammering with my irons and screaming for aid. It seemed to me that the thunders of the storm redoubled in violence, as if Nature was conspiring to shout me down. Once I looked round and saw that the light about the trap had gone. Graden had smothered the spot with blankets. Presently he came groping to me, raising his great voice in hoarse bellowings.

And then it happened.

There came an acrid, piercing scent to my nostrils, that grew and grew until my lungs seemed to contract, so that I fought for very breath. My cries ceased. I struggled to my feet, with my head raised like a bird shot through the lungs. Brilliant lights flashed in my eyes; there were hollow drummings in my ears. And then it seemed that the air left me in a vacuum. I fell, and forgot it all.

* * * * *

It was daylight when I remember facts again. The motion of the ship had ceased, and there was an English stranger by my side. My chest felt bruised and battered, and my eyes still watered freely. Also I was very weak and ill.

"My cousin?" I faltered.

"We have got your friend round," said the doctor—for so I felt that he must be, "also the other man."

"What man?"

"The man who pulled you out after the cylinder exploded. A red-headed fellow—Blake, I think his name is. You owe your lives to him. You had both fainted when he opened the door."

"Then he heard us, after all! Tell me—what became of Marnac?"

"I really don't know about him. I don't think he was injured. Oh! perhaps you mean the old gentleman who bolted?"

"Bolted?"

"Yes; of course, there was great excitement over the accident. The captain was dreadfully cut up over the death of his servant. He could not imagine how it came about. When the ship arrived here, Mr. Marnac, or whatever his name was, slipped away by a shore-boat, while everyone was fussing over you. Your friend has gone to inquire about him, I fancy. The old man had something against you both, hadn't he? Or was it you against him?"

"Both, doctor, both," I whispered, shutting my eyes.

TO A FRIEND.

WHEN work for you is ended,
And, scorning your poor soul,
You leave it undefended
And say—"It missed the goal"—

The Judge will just ignore you,
But heed, as it ascends
In loving triumph for you,
The verdict of your friends.

JESSIE POPE.

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By T. Sidney Allnutt.

Wax-works and Westminster Abbey would seem to have as little in common, with the exception of the initial W, as, say, Punch and Judy and St. Paul's; and it will surprise many to learn that a collection of waxen effigies is among the most interesting features of the "Collegiate Church of Saint Peter's, at Westminster."

Yet such is the fact. The wax-works are easily accessible; they can be seen whenever the Abbey is open, on payment of 3*d.* or 6*d.*, according to the day of the week. So very few people, however, seem to be aware of their existence that they are practically ignored, and the excellent and, with one exception, hitherto unpublished photographs which we are able to give of them will therefore, doubtless, be the more interesting.

It is true that the collection cannot pretend to rival "Tussaud's" in point of magnitude, being, in fact, limited to eleven figures — *viz.:* Queen Elizabeth, King Charles II., King William III. and Queen Mary II., Queen Anne, the Duchess of Buckingham and her two sons, the Duchess of Richmond, the great Pitt, Earl of Chatham, and, last but not least, Horatio, Viscount Nelson; but what it lacks in size is made up in interest of quite an unique description.

It will be seen that the figures all represent well-known people, and they may be trusted to represent them faithfully, for in most cases the features have been modelled from death-masks, while the figures are dressed in costumes which were worn by their originals during the time that they were making history which is rapidly growing ancient. So that these men and women of wax possess an "actuality"—to use the favourite term just now—which is not shared by many of their kind.

They are to be found in a little loft above Abbot Islip's Chapel—itself one of the gems of the Abbey—in the north aisle of the apse. A small door and narrow, winding staircase give access to the abode of the wax-works; and as, lighted lantern in hand, a verger in his dark, flowing robes leads the way upward, the surroundings have a natural effect upon the imagination and are apt to make one feel very mediæval indeed. And there is nothing of that frivolous air of conscious fraud which usually characterises wax-works, in these solemn figures, to dispel the glamour of the past which seems to hang about the place. The waxen folk look out of their dim cases with a startling appearance of life-likeness and reality, looking, in the half-light, rather like a coterie of spirits from the

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QUEEN ELIZABETH.

underworld revisiting "the glimpses of the moon" than the wax models they are.

It is a superstition common to most primitive peoples that the spirit of a dead person will haunt an image of its earthly body, and, looking at these figures, it requires but a small effort of imagination to make one think that each all but speaking mask hides a prisoned soul.

It is difficult to help comparing them with the marble memorials of monarchs, statesmen, and other dignitaries or notorieties which throng the Abbey floor below. Who has not been amused to note the vacuous loftiness of expression which the sculptors have been so fond of giving to those gentlemen in Roman togas and other strange garments who, at the same time, all look so painfully conscious that they are perched on pedestals for ever and must live up to the trying position? What human interest do they possess? Surely not the smallest. The waxen portraits, on the other hand, are not merely memorials of eminent people, but real records of once living men and women, with all their greatnesses and meannesses, potentialities and failings indelibly imprinted on their faces. Each figure is a bit of history, and more; it is an autobiography. Hardly anything else could make one so

CHARLES II.

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readily and thoroughly realise that "Good Queen Bess," the "Merry Monarch," and the rest are not merely historical abstractions, but were real individuals who ate and drank, laughed and wept through their little span as the greatest and least of us do to-day.

One of the most interesting figures is that of Queen Elizabeth. It is as the figurehead of a certain period that she is generally thought of and, as such, is awarded a great deal of undeserved credit for the brilliance of her statesmen and naval and military commanders, as well as for the literary and dramatic achievements which made her reign so notable.

Here we see the woman. Her face is interesting, but not at all lovable. Firm will is, perhaps, its most salient characteristic; it would seem obstinacy but for the corrective calculation shown by the upper part of the face. The tightly compressed lips look not a little cruel, too, and the general impression one receives is that of an extremely able but entirely unscrupulous woman; and there is a touch of the virago in the face which helps to explain a good deal that seems puzzling in the records of her life.

She wears a gown of royal purple and what looks like an extremely heavy brocade with bright metal threads running through it—a variety of cloth-of-gold, maybe — and the exaggerated Medici lace collar which we always associate with Queen Bess is not wanting. A crown and sceptre decked with transparently artificial jewels can do nothing to rob the figure of its dignity.

This figure, by the way, is not the original one, made at the time of Elizabeth's death, but a copy, made in 1760, from the old one, which was worn out by exhibition. It was then exhibited close by Queen Elizabeth's tomb, without the protection of a case, and no doubt received a good deal of rough handling.

Charles II., whose figure occupies the next case, is another particularly interesting personality. The dark eyes and swarthy complexion make him look but little of an Englishman; but the face is by no means an altogether unpleasing one. It is entirely lacking in the imperious dignity which so strongly marks that of Elizabeth, but, in compensation, is infinitely more sympathetic. The "Merry Monarch" really does not look a bad fellow at all. If we may believe the information given by his face, he lacked chiefly firmness of character. He looks like one who always followed the line of least resistance, and as that invariably leads in an undesirable direction, it may be that to this weakness rather than to innate vice his many shortcomings may have been due. At any rate, certain it is that a look at his waxen presentment makes one very willing to make all possible excuses for him.

His dress is of crimson velvet, made yet more beautiful by some fine old lace, silk

WILLIAM III. AND HIS CONSORT, QUEEN MARY.

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FRANCES THERESA, DUCHESS OF RICHMOND AND LENNOX, AND HER PARROT.

stockings, and rather high-heeled shoes, and his head is crowned by a quaint piece of headgear sufficient alone to conjure up a picture of seventeenth century England before our mental vision. Altogether Charles looks like a very good picture of a gallant of his period, but a more unmajestic Majesty it would be impossible to imagine.

In a case on the other side of that containing Queen Elizabeth's presentment are the figures of King William III. and Queen Mary II. The short stature of William III. is faithfully represented in his waxen portrait, which is standing on a cushion in order that the head may be on a level with that of Queen Mary. Both of the figures are dressed in royal robes of purple and ermine, and each wears a crown and carries orb and sceptre as further outward and visible signs of the exalted rank of its original.

Queen Mary died in 1694, in the thirty-third year of her age, of smallpox, and as her face was modelled from a plaster cast taken after death, it can, perhaps, hardly be considered a fair representation of her appearance during life, being naturally rather haggard as the result of her illness. Her face is not in any case particularly notable, being plainly that of an amiable nonentity.

The face of William III. is much more worthy of notice. The forehead is broad and high, the brows have a thoughtful frown, and the mouth is firm and a trifle cynical. It is the face of a capable man of affairs and a born ruler of men, who had lived through all his illusions and found the core of life rather bitter to the taste. If ever a whole life were summed up in a face, it is here; and no doubt the story written in its firm outlines is pleasanter to read than it was to write.

The remaining royalty is Queen Anne, whose rather squat figure is also dressed in royal purple—the ermine being represented by a kind of broad ribbon trimming, as may be seen by the photograph, over a robe of silk brocade. She wears an imposing crown. Sceptre and orb of not less majestic dimensions are also among her "properties." Her hair is done in a series of tight ringlets and is allowed to fall over her shoulders. Anne does not look at all the mere cipher that so many historians have made of her. Her face is both pleasant and intelligent, and gives evidence of no little force of character.

A figure slightly earlier than that of Queen Anne, chronologically speaking, is that of Frances Theresa, Duchess of Richmond and Lennox, better known, perhaps, as "La Belle Stewart." The Duchess, who, by the way, is said to have sat as the model for the

figure of Britannia on our coinage, was the daughter of William Stewart, a member of the Blantyre family, and was a famous beauty in her day. The Duchess died on the 15th October, 1702, the year of Queen Anne's coronation. She left instructions that after death she was to be "as well done in wax as may be," and her figure wears the robes worn by the Duchess at the coronation ceremonies. The dress is a handsome one, the bodice being of velvet trimmed with ermine, and the skirt of a very rich and handsome silk brocade. The sleeves and skirt are trimmed with some very lovely old lace, which must be worth a small fortune.

In the same case as the Duchess of Richmond is a stuffed grey parrot, also a celebrity in its way. The bird, having lived with the Duchess for forty years, died only a day or two after her. Her Grace was very fond of the bird, and its presence with her waxen memorial is a pretty touch of sentiment quite in accordance with the fitness of things.

The Duchess of Buckingham, whose figure, with that of her second son, occupies the next case, was the wife of John Sheffield, Duke of Normanby and Buckinghamshire, usually styled, by himself, indeed, as well as by others, Duke of Buckingham. John Sheffield was a very high mightiness indeed—great enough to have aspired, in his earlier days, to the hand of the Princess Anne. The Princess did not accept him, but she evidently was not offended by his presumption, for she bestowed the two dukedoms upon him very soon after she came to the throne. The Duchess of Buckingham was the half-sister of Anne, being the daughter of James II., by Catherine Sidley, afterwards the Countess of Dorchester. The Duchess had been previously married to Lord Anglesey, but obtained a divorce from him on the ground of ill-treatment. Lord Anglesey was, however, not living at the time of her marriage with Buckingham. The Duchess is robed in a handsome dress of velvet, fur, and a magnificent brocade, and some glorious old lace is again used as trimming.

The child who is with the Duchess died in 1715, being then a few weeks over three years of age. It is curious that the figure looks like that of a much older child.

In the centre of the little loft is the figure of the Duchess of Buckingham's third son, who lived to become Duke of Buckingham, though he died at the early age of eighteen. It is said that his mother had the effigy made under her own supervision, and wished to borrow the funeral car which had been used in the obsequies of the great Marlborough. The Duchess of Marlborough refused to lend it, whereat her Grace of Buckingham contemptuously declared that her undertaker had offered to supply a finer one for £20.

The figure of the young Duke is arrayed in his peer's robes and ducal coronet, and it is noteworthy that this is the only case in which the deceased is represented in a recumbent position. This funeral, it may be of interest to mention, was the last one in which an effigy

THE DUCHESS OF BUCKINGHAM AND HER INFANT SON.

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GOOD QUEEN ANNE.

was laid on the coffin. The custom afterwards fell into disuse.

The remaining figures are those of Pitt and Nelson. The former is not very good, and unquestionably gives anything but a fair idea of George III.'s greatest minister. That of Nelson, on the contrary, is excellent, although it was not modelled from a cast, but from portrait sketches. The spare figure and keen, sympathetic face are those of a man who would always win respect and affection from those who knew him; and the blind eye and empty sleeve are eloquent though silent reminders of his services to his country. The clothes worn by Nelson's effigy were all once worn by the hero himself, with the exception of the coat.

It was merely for exhibition purposes that the figures of Pitt and Nelson were made; indeed, it is said that the latter owes its being to the fact that when, after the burial of Nelson in St. Paul's, all the world was paying a pilgrimage to his tomb, the authorities at the Abbey considered that they were being unduly neglected, and accordingly had a figure of the popular idol modelled and exhibited in order to rival the attraction at the metropolitan Cathedral.

The cases in which the figures are shown

NELSON.

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were probably made in the seventeenth century.

In a corner of the loft is a suit of armour once worn by General Monk, and afterwards by his effigy, which has been since destroyed; and a cupboard contains fragments of many earlier figures.

With the exception of the last two figures mentioned, the presence of these waxen portraits in Westminster Abbey is owing to the old custom of placing an effigy of a deceased person on the coffin during the funeral ceremonies, the figure being afterwards placed on or near the tomb.

In very primitive times the figure was made with the idea of affording a habitation for the spirit of the dead man or woman; and as it was thought that the spirit would prefer a habitation as nearly as possible similar to that which it occupied during life, care was taken that the effigy should truthfully represent the deceased in "his form and habit as he walk'd"; and the custom of making these post-mortem portraits faithful likenesses of their subjects prevailed long after the old-time reason for so doing was forgotten.

The custom was undoubtedly a survival from very early days indeed, but was very tenacious, as burial customs invariably are. Even to-day, in military funerals the dead man's charger is led behind his bier—a last survival of the time when horses and servants were sacrificed at the graveside, in order that they might serve their master in the underworld; while volleys are fired across his grave—a custom which in its

PITT, EARL OF CHATHAM.

THE YOUNG DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Buried in 1736. The last instance of the custom of placing an effigy of the deceased on the coffin.

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origin grew out of the desire to scare away malevolent spirits from the tomb.

At one time boiled leather was the material in which the funeral effigies were modelled; but the art was lost, and wax was afterwards used, a fact in no wise to be regretted, for wax, pliant as it is, suffers very little from the ravages of time.

Whether considered as evidences of the survival of a curious burial custom, as portraits, or as illustrations of history, this little company of waxen celebrities certainly deserves far more attention than it receives; and a visit to the wax-works at Westminster Abbey may be relied upon to provide that excellent combination of "amusement and instruction" so often recommended.

A BALLADE OF PROTEST.

By THEODOSIA HARRISON.

I LIKE full well our modern ways,
Of late inventions fond am I;
These are the wondrous, glorious days;
I'm glad last year I did not die!
To-day great steamships quickly ply
'Twixt this and lands beyond compare;
But for one ancient thing I sigh—
Give me an old-time love-affair.

They sing to-day the modern lays
That none of old had sense to try;
And there are, too, the modern plays,
And buildings tall that reach the sky;
More wondrous is the modern lie,
Unknown to ancient folk; I swear
I love improvement; but, my, my!
Give me an old-time love-affair.

The telegraph, that lifts the haze
From things remote and brings them nigh,
Is something that would make one gaze
Who lived in days departed; why
Should one object that wondrously
His words go hurtling through the air?
Though useful things I'll not decry,
Give me an old-time love-affair.

L'ENVOI.

Sweetheart, forget the modern tie
That binds you in convention's snare.
Forget these modern methods; fie!
Give me an old-time love-affair!

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THE LITTLE BROWN BOY.

By L. G. MOBERLY.

HE sat in the front row. It was the first time that he had ever been to a Military Tournament, and he thought it was the most wonderful sight he had ever seen in all his nine years of life. He scarcely took his eyes off the soldiers and horses, and each manœuvre in turn he watched with absorbed interest. His mother spent most of her time in watching him. For the little brown boy was the centre and joy of her whole life. You see, his father had gone away into the silent land when his small son had been a laughing, brown-eyed baby, and now the little brown boy was, as his mother said, "everything in the world" to her.

"My goodness!" he exclaimed breathlessly, as the men and horses went through each wonderful performance, "I'll have to be a soldier, mother. I couldn't be anything else, could I?"

"No, sonny," she answered softly; and if she sighed, well, nobody noticed it; and if her eyes grew dim with tears, no one saw them, because they were fixed on the little brown boy, and his were glued to the arena. She knew he would, as he expressed it, "have to be a soldier." He came of a soldier race, and he would, of course, follow in his father's and grandfather's footsteps.

It happened that on the day when his mother and he were at the Military Tournament, a very great and distinguished commander was also there. He was so great a man that when the audience realised his presence, they rose to their feet as one man, and cheered him until the place rang with the sound again and again. The little brown boy clambered upon his chair to get a good view of the hero, and the eyes of the small, eager-faced boy and the stalwart, keen-faced man met. The little boy was waving his cap in his small brown hands, and a smile rippled over the great soldier's face, and a light sprang into his blue eyes as he met those adoring brown ones. A flush of joy swept over the little brown boy's cheeks. He whispered to his mother in awestruck tones—

"He smiled at me, mother. I say, wasn't I a lucky chap? My goodness! I'd like to shake hands with him; only, of course, he wouldn't *shake hands* with a little chap like me."

Wait a bit, little brown boy; the time may come!

It was later on in the same afternoon that something happened which gave a clue to what stuff the little brown boy was made of. Just when the performance was at its height, and the great hall packed from end to end, a sudden cry went up from close to one of the entrances.

"Fire! Fire!"

In the flash of a second a wave of panic spread through the audience, and there began one of those ghastly rushes which, once seen, can never be forgotten.

The little brown boy glanced at his mother. His face was white, but his eyes shone; he slipped a hand into hers.

"We'd better stop here, dear," he said; "we'd never get through the crowd. I'll take care of you, mummy." And his mother, looking down at him, realised all at once some strange force of character in her little son.

The panic was over in a few minutes, the alarm proved to have been a false one; but if his mother had been proud of him before, she was prouder than ever now of her little brown boy.

It was his mother who had first given him that title—because of the clear brown of his face and the deep, soft brown of his eyes and hair. She had a fancy, too, for dressing him in brown clothes, so that the name by no means suited him badly. He was her one and only joy—I have said that, have I not? And, dear chivalrous little soul, he did his level best to take care of her as if he had been a man.

He could dimly remember—very, very dimly—being lifted upon his father's bed, long ago, and hearing his father say very faintly, in a weak, tired voice: "God bless you, my son! Be a brave, good man. Take care of mother—some day." And though he had been so small when the words were spoken, they had somehow become rooted in his mind. The two ambitions of his life were: to take care of mother and to be a good soldier like father.

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"Nobody knows what he is to me," his mother used to say; "he is so thoughtful and tender for such a little boy. He is always thinking how he can make me happy."

Not that he was not a thoroughly boy-like boy, on the other hand, in spite of his old-fashioned ways. He was always to the fore in every manly game at the school to which he went every day, and I am afraid that his mother was more proud of him than otherwise when he returned from his first fight, proud and triumphant. He had knocked down his adversary at every round, although the adversary had the advantage of him in age and size.

And after the Military Tournament, no one guessed what agonies his mother endured when the little brown boy spent all his leisure time in trying to perform all the acrobatic feats he had witnessed, and in endeavouring to induce the pony to perform, in the paddock that adjoined the house, all the marvellous evolutions he had admired as carried out by the horses of the Dragoons!

"You see, mother," he said gravely, "if I'm to be a soldier, I'd better learn all these things as fast as ever I can, so as I'll be a better soldier when the time comes. It wouldn't do for a soldier to be afraid, or not able to do things, would it, mother?"

And Mrs. Liddell smiled and agreed, and bore the agony as well as she could, feeling convinced that Denis would end his heroic manœuvres in some disastrous fashion. But he managed to survive, nevertheless. A boy—like a cat—has nine lives, I fancy; and this boy, in spite of a variety of accidents sufficiently alarming to turn grey the hair of the most hardened mother, did escape with life and limb, and grew from a little brown boy into a big one.

But though he altered in size, he remained the same in nature—loving, tender-hearted, straight and strong, a boy to make his mother's heart swell with pride very often.

His care for his "little mother," as he called her when he shot up to be a head and shoulders taller than she was, was as chivalrous and thoughtful as ever; and I think that if she had expressed the least shadow of dislike to his entering the Army, he would have given up what was the ambition and dream of his life—to be a great soldier. But Mrs. Liddell had not been a soldier's daughter and a soldier's wife for nothing. If he talked of the days when he would wear the Queen's uniform and perhaps even fight for England, she smiled and entered into all his hopes; she never let him know how it made her heart ache to think of the time that was coming when her boy would have to go out, like the other sons of the Empire, to guard the Empire's outposts.

That is the way with mothers. Theirs is the pain and the watching and waiting, at home, whilst the Empire claims their darlings for its own!

This mother was like all the rest.

She almost counted the days whilst he was still at Sandhurst; she quite counted the hours when the order went forth that Denis Liddell was to join his regiment in Egypt; and she went with him to Southampton with a smiling face and breaking heart. Her little brown boy was all the world to her, and he was going away, perhaps for ever!

* * * * *

A wide stretch of desert sand.

Away in the west the sun, a blood-red ball, was sinking to rest in a clear, brilliant sky, throwing long, level rays across the battle-field. The famous charge was over. The battle had raged fiercely. On every hand lay the dead and the dying, but the fight above their heads did not cease. In the midst of the fiercest fighting rode a brown-faced boy, his eyes shining, his lips set hard, his face grim with the stern elation and excitement of this his first taste of war; and when the great charge was over, his features relaxed a little, but his eyes shone still.

Suddenly a voice beside him exclaimed: "Good Heavens! where is Renton? He was hit—just now—back there—amongst those fiends . . . Good Heavens!"

Without a word or syllable, the brown-faced boy turned his horse. He looked at the man, whose words had been spoken gaspingly, breathlessly, because of a wound received in that great onslaught. He leant a little from the saddle and touched the other man's hand, his eyes fixed on the white face, where pain was already carving deep lines.

"I'm going back for Renton," he said quietly.

"Great Heavens, man! you can't. It's a sheer impossibility. Why—Liddell, it's riding back—into—hell——"

"Then into hell I must ride," the boy answered shortly.

"God bless you!" the elder man's weak voice whispered; and the boy rode back into the wild, hideous battle behind them.

His lips were more tightly set than ever, but his brown eyes still shone, though verily it seemed as though he had ridden into hell

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"'He smiled at me, mother. My goodness! I'd like to shake hands with him.'"

itself. Evil-faced Dervishes closed round him, the groans of the dying, the cries of the wounded mingled in his ears with the fierce shouts of the foe. A gash across his cheek sent the blood raining down his face, blinding him for a moment. . . . . He literally hewed his way onwards, one thought only surging through his brain—Renton must be found and rescued. To find him at all in the fearful *mêlée* seemed at first a sheer impossibility; but at last—at last he uttered a little exclamation of thankfulness, for there, lying at his feet, was the man he sought. . . . . How he did it, he could never after tell, but he flung himself from his horse and lifted the wounded man upon it.

"Better leave me," Renton whispered

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feebly; "we shall never both get through—splendid of—you to—come."

"Oh, it's all right," the boy answered, as he swung himself into the saddle behind his comrade and held the almost unconscious form close to him. Those deadly moments that followed brought grey hairs upon Denis Liddell's head.

Whilst his left hand gripped the wounded man firmly, he warded off with his right hand, as well as he could, the blows that fell upon him from all sides. . . . . A scalp wound made him dizzy and sick; a spear thrust in his leg sent a thrill of agony through him; but he never loosed his hold of the man he held, and his faithful horse went forward with no more guidance than his own wisdom and steadfastness, which he seemed to share with his young master.

The dizziness and sickness were fast getting the better of the little brown boy, the fiendish faces round him ran together into one hideous nightmare, the ground seemed to rock and wave like the sea, the sky began to stoop to meet it. There was a surging in his ears like a rushing of waters, and all at once he thought he saw his mother's face; and then—above and beyond all—a ringing cheer pierced his fast dulling senses. He tried to pull himself together to discover what it meant, when suddenly his horse stood still.

The world still rocked and waved round him, but the dark fiends were gone, and in their stead English faces looked into his; eager hands took his unconscious burden from his arm, and other eager hands lifted him from the saddle. There was a hum of voices about him, and cheer after cheer rang out again and again from the crowd of soldiers clustering round.

He reeled and put his hand to his head.

"What is it?" he said faintly. "Why are they cheering? Who is it for?"

"Why, for you, old chap," someone answered chokingly. "They're cheering you."

And then Denis Liddell tottered and would have fallen, but for the kindly arms that bore him into safe quarters.

* * * * *

When he was next conscious of any external matters, Denis found himself in bed, and, as he expressed it, "like a mummy for bandages." He was very stiff and sore, intensely hot, and his head ached maddeningly. But the world no longer rocked up and down, and he could think for two seconds consecutively, which was more than he had been able to do for a long time. Two seconds was quite long enough for thought; at the end of that time he was glad to lie down and watch idly a long streak of sunlight that lay across his bed. As he watched, the streak widened, because someone parted the door of the tent and let in a broad pathway of blazing white sunbeams from outside.

Denis heard a clear, decided voice say softly: "One moment, Dale, I want to see how the boy is," and then a shadow fell across the strip of sunlight on the bed, and a tall man stood beside it.

A strange, bewildered recollection came back to Denis of a certain Military Tournament, years ago, and of a great commander for whose sake the audience had risen to its feet and cheered, and of a little brown-faced boy who had said eagerly: "My goodness! I'd like to shake hands with him; only, of course, he wouldn't *shake hands* with a little chap like me."

His two seconds of consecutive thought had lengthened themselves into something nearer a minute, his mind had passed into blankness again, when again it was roused. A strong hand gripped his, his eyes met the glance of a pair of piercing blue ones, full to the brim of a strange tenderness.

"Getting on, my boy?" a clear, decided voice said, still in that curiously softened tone. "This is the first time you have known me."

The strong hand still held the boy's closely. Denis looked at it almost curiously; a queer little smile broke over his white face.

"I knew you—long ago—sir," he whispered, "when I was—a little chap—I wanted to shake hands—with you—I—never thought . . . should."

His eyes closed. The great General looked at him gravely. He fancied the boy was wandering, and beckoned to the doctor who had entered the tent quietly.

"How is he?" the General asked. "I thought at first he was better, but he seems to be wandering. We can't afford to lose him."

"I hope we shan't do that, sir," the doctor said cheerily. "He's had a hard fight, and so have we, for his life; but he and we have won. He'll do now."

And the next morning, when the General again entered the tent, Denis's brown eyes met his in full recognition, and a flush crept over the boy's face as again the strong man's hand grasped his.

"Ah! you really know me this time, my boy," the great man said gently.

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Denis smiled.

"I knew you yesterday, sir," he said, "only I got a bit mixed, remembering a day years ago when I had seen you before. I never thought then that you would take such a lot of trouble over me now."

"*Trouble?*" The great soldier's strong point was not speech, but the grip of his hand spoke volumes. "You've got to get well quickly now. We want men like you."

"The strong man's hand grasped his."

"We want men like you." The words brought a flush to Denis's face once more, rang in his ears day and night afterwards, echoed and re-echoed in his brain when, a few weeks later, he was invalided home to recruit his strength.

"He seemed to mean it, too, mother," he said simply. "Not that I did anything, you know; but he was jolly good to me, and I tell you, I never was so surprised at anything in my life as I was when I looked up and saw him by my bed. Shaking hands with me, too, as if I had *done* something! He was jolly good to take any notice of a youngster like me. If I had really done anything, I could understand it; but of course, I did nothing except get a lot of wounds and give a lot of bother!"

Perhaps his mother viewed the matter differently. Mothers do sometimes! Perhaps her pride in him was justified—for there came a day when he laid in her lap the small bronze cross which Her Majesty gave to her soldiers "for valour," a day when his mother knew that others besides herself recognised as a hero her "little brown boy!"

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THE WASTE OF PUBLIC MONEY.

By ERNEST E. WILLIAMS,

Author of "The Imperial Heritage," "Made in Germany," "Marching Backward," and "The Foreigner in the Farmyard."

No. V.—ROYAL COMMISSIONS AND PENSIONS.

NOTE.—I wish at the commencement of each of these articles to remove a possible cause of misapprehension. It is necessary, in the course of them, to say hard things of members of the present Government; but that is because the present Government has been in office for a number of years beyond which, in order to keep the illustrations of bureaucratic methods up to date, it has not been thought desirable to travel. Criticisms involving the acts of Ministers are not to be interpreted as in any sense a party attack, and it is not suggested that had the Opposition been in office, its members would have done better.—E. E. W.

THE question of waste in Stationery and Printing, which we discussed in the previous article, naturally prompts consideration of the numerous Committees and Royal Commissions whose stationery and printing charges account for no insensible item in the expenditure of the Stationery and Printing Department.

There are who laugh at Royal Commissions, deride them as the Governmental method of stifling an agitation and hanging up needed legislation. Cases may be cited in support. But we will not now pursue this argument, for Select Committees and Royal Commissions have their uses as well as their abuses. They are the method whereby the authorities focus information on a subject that seems to demand inquiry and action, and whereby more or less independent opinion is obtained for Governmental guidance. It may, however, be noted in passing that Royal Commissions cost money, and that this point may usefully be borne in mind when inquiries upon this, that, and the other matter are demanded.

My present subject is more particularly the question whether our Royal Commissions need cost as much money as they do. It is not an easy subject to dogmatise upon in respect to scientific and similar charges, yet an examination of the accounts presented of expenses incurred in connection with these Commissions does prompt the notion that more economy might be exercised.

Let us take the Estimates for the year 1902–3. The Commissions therein provided for are as follows: Historical Manuscripts, Colonisation Board, Sewage Disposal, Arsenical Poisoning, Tuberculosis, Coal Supplies, University Education in Ireland, Ichthyological Research, and Commissions not specifically provided for. The Vote asked for the expense of these Commissions was £44,000, but that sum does not represent their total cost to the country, since provision for expenditure in connection with the Commissions is made in other Estimates to the amount of £9,134. The country is thus asked to spend £53,134 upon these few inquiries. That is for one year, and they all extend over more than one year, and one or two are of a quasi-permanent character. In view of the nature and variety of these inquiries, it is impossible to say whether the results they will achieve will be worth the money expended upon them; but even were it proved that their value to the country might be expressed in millions, rather than in tens of thousands, that is no reason why more should be spent upon them than is necessary. And that more is spent upon them than is necessary is apparent from the salary list, at any rate.

The Secretary of the Royal Commission on Sewage Disposal is a clerk (presumably well paid) in the Local Government Board, yet he is paid £150 a year extra for looking after the Commission. The Secretary of the Royal Commission on Arsenical Poisoning is a medical inspector under the Local Government Board, yet he gets £300 a year additional for attending to the Commission. The Assistant Secretary to the Royal Commission on Coal Supplies is a second-class clerk in the Treasury, but he is awarded £150 a year for helping the Secretary of this Commission, who himself is paid at the rate of £400 a year. In this last case it is not

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quite apparent why a Royal Commission, composed, of course, of gentlemen who give up some of their spare time to sitting upon it, should need at all both a well-paid secretary and an under-secretary, more especially since the salaries of these two officials do not exhaust the payments for clerical work in connection with this Commission. In this year's Estimate another £300 is down for clerical assistance, and £50 for typewriting;

and these secretaries and clerks are not persons who take the notes of the proceedings, for a sum of £480 also appears under the head of shorthand writing. These items of clerical assistance, typewriting and shorthand, appear in the expenses of all the Commissions. Thus, the Royal Commission on University Education in Ireland proposed to spend during the year £416 for clerical assistance, £25 upon typewriting, and £500 upon shorthand writing, besides the wages of a couple of messengers.

But to return to the question of double salaries. Here is one more instance. The late Royal Commission on Local Taxation had a secretary who was paid £300 a year, though he was an assistant labour commissioner at the Board of Trade; it had an assistant secretary who was paid £150 a year, though he was a second-class clerk at the Treasury. Can it be supposed that the staffs of the Treasury and Local Government Board are so overworked that when clerks and officials are wanted for a little work in connection with a Royal Commission, considerable additions are necessary to their salaries? No one with any acquaintance with Civil Service offices would suggest such an explanation. Most Civil servants are both well paid and underworked, and one is inclined to suggest a Royal Commission upon Royal Commissions.

Though this matter of unnecessary payments in connection with Royal Commissions is a small affair compared with the scandals involving tens and hundreds of thousands of pounds which we have previously discussed, yet it is not to be ignored upon that account. A saving of even a few hundreds a year is worth making; a waste of a few hundreds a year is, in any case, to be avoided. And, as I have so often impressed upon my readers, these things are symptomatic. It is not possible, without an intimate knowledge of the details of every department of the public service—such knowledge as no one individual can obtain—to ascertain every piece of wastefulness and make a complete tale of every unnecessary and overpaid appointment. It is only the instances which come into the public view which are available to the general student of public expenditure; and it is, therefore, as instances, as exhibitions of a general tendency, that these cases are to be largely and perhaps chiefly regarded. And, so regarded, they cease to be small affairs.

Civil Service Pensions.

It is desirable to pursue this matter of salaries into a wider field, and to try to arrive at a solution of the question whether Civil servants are generally paid at higher rates than the conditions of remuneration outside the Service justify; for if this question can be answered in the affirmative, most clearly we must have a change. It would be monstrously unfair that the tax-

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payers, who provide these salaries, should have to pay upon a bigger scale than they themselves can earn by proportionate labour and ability. But the subject is very complicated, and elusive in the pursuit. It is extremely difficult to say exactly what any man's work is worth; and even when you have determined that point, there remains the complexity of discovering what is his real remuneration for purposes of comparison. A nominal wage is not the only factor; the conditions of service and any indirect additions to the wage which there may be have to be brought into the reckoning. In the case of our Civil servants there exists one very important form of indirect addition—the pension system. Consideration thereof will aid us materially in forming a judgment upon the general question of Civil servants' remuneration.

A system of old-age pensions for the population at large, or for the working-class majority of it, has been a good deal debated in recent years, and we are likely to hear more about it. Royal Commissions have sat upon the question, and have attempted to discover a feasible scheme. Hitherto, most of these schemes have broken down upon the question of cost. Such of the taxpayers' money as can be swept into the public revenue is, according to the general view, needed for other purposes—defence, education, etc.; and when the citizen, as ratepayer, has provided for the needy according to the existing system of Poor Relief, it is at present thought that he has done as much as can be reasonably asked of him. In adopting this line it is assumed that old-age pensions would be good if sufficient money could be found, but the denial of old-age pensions is often fortified with the further argument that such a system would encourage thriftlessness. Both these points are worth bearing in mind in connection with the fact that we have at present for certain privileged classes in the country systems of old-age pensions involving enormous depredations upon the public revenue. I am not urging this as an argument why we should give old-age pensions generally, but rather as a reason why we should examine with particular care the systems of pensions which exist.

I will leave upon one side the pensions,

half-pay, etc., which are given in the Army and Navy. They, too, involve an immense amount of money, and we should keep their existence at the back of our minds when considering Civil Service pensions. For the present, however, they need not be brought into more prominence; Civil Service pensions may claim our exclusive immediate attention. And these, like all other forms of public expenditure, are steadily growing. The point they have already reached may be seen from the following. In the Civil Service Estimates for 1902-3, a Vote, under the head of Superannuation and Retired Allowances, was asked for to the amount of £607,950. But this is but a relatively small portion of the total amount spent in

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pensions, for, in the same year, there is expended from the Consolidated Fund and from Votes for the purpose included in other Estimates, no less a sum than £1,960,302. The aggregate sum, therefore, is £2,568,272 (two years earlier, £2,404,819). But even this does not quite exhaust Civil Service pensions, since there are retired allowances given to officials of the House of Lords amounting to between £4,000 and £5,000 a year, which are paid out of the Invested Fee Fund or out of fees; and, though not of the same *genre*, the pensions paid to private individuals out of the Civil List may also be named. It will suffice, however, to bear in mind the simple fact that Civil Service pensions and allowances of a similar character cost the country over two and a half millions a year, with every prospect of the cost increasing as the years go on. It is equivalent to more than a penny in the pound of the Income Tax.

Consider this expenditure in the light of the two arguments against general old-age pensions which I have named above. First, we are overburdened with rates and taxes already, and if that fact justifies us in denying old-age pensions to the poor (really in their case only an alteration and extension of the existing Poor Relief system), why should the burdened taxpayer provide old-age pensions for men for whose services he has paid well throughout their working lives, and who are, or should be, less in want of old-age pensions than the vast majority of the people who have to provide them? And with regard to the second argument, if old-age pensions generally are to be denied because they encourage thriftlessness, the argument applies with special force to men who from their boyhood up to the verge of their old age have—without a break on account of illness or slackness of work—received regularly month by month a salary of continuously increasing amount, and a salary which we have every reason to believe is—in the vast majority of cases—at least as much as they could earn by similar work outside the Service. Surely, if anyone can provide for his old age, it is these people, and to relieve them of the necessity is a more blamable encouragement to thriftlessness than it would be in the case of working men, but few of whom have an unbroken life-spell of work and wages. Civil servants may not find all this palatable, but let them regard the question from the point of view of the taxpayers, who provide those pensions. I, for example, am not a Civil servant. No one is providing for my old age. When I become too old to work or too old to be regarded as worth employment, or—should that event happen sooner—when I become too ill to work, or should the journal for which I write no longer be able to afford my services, I am thrown entirely upon my own resources—notwithstanding that, during the time that I have been at work, part of the money which I have earned by my work I have had to contribute towards the pensions of other men. I do not, however, in using these arguments, wish it to be assumed that I am pushing them to the extent of declaring that I regard any system of old-age pensions as wrong. We may stop well short of that extreme position and yet find no justification for the very generous scale of pensions which now obtains in the Civil Service.

Now let us proceed to consider the pensions in a little illustrative detail. A glance down the Abstract of the Civil Service Estimates, where the amounts debited to various offices for superannuation, compensation, and compassionate allowances are set out, discloses figures which are at least striking. Thus, for these allowances the British Museum costs £12,712 a year (it was £11,815 the previous year); a little office like the Charity Commission costs £3,756 a year; Consular Services run to £47,943 a year (against £46,220 the previous year); Prisons take £81,050 (against £77,610 the previous year).

These lump sums suggest that the scale of payment is generous, and we may, therefore, at this point look at the scale. This will be found in an Act of Parliament of 1859, Section 2 of which sets out the ordinary rate of superannuation in the Civil Service. It is as follows: For ten years' service an annual allowance of ten-sixtieths of the salary and emoluments of the retiring servant; for eleven years, eleven-sixtieths, and so on, with an addition of one-sixtieth for each additional year of service until the completion of a period of forty years' service, when the annual allowance of forty-sixtieths may be granted, and beyond that no further allowance is now made. That is to say, the normal Civil servant, who enters the Service as a youth, and remains in it until he is sixty or sixty-five years of age, retires with a pension equal to two-thirds of his total remuneration at the time he left the Service. Under the Act of 1829 even greater benefits than this were given, but it will be conceded, by anyone not in the Service, that a pension of two-thirds of the

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maximum salary implies a generous scale. Nor is even this scale interpreted in any niggardly spirit. There are various exceptions to the ordinary rate, and these exceptions are all in the direction of higher scales. Thus, the Treasury has power to order that in cases where "professional or other peculiar qualifications not ordinarily to be acquired in the public service are required, and it is for the interest of the public that persons should be appointed thereto at an age exceeding that at which public service ordinarily begins," an addition of a number of years not exceeding twenty may be made to the retiring servant's pension when the amount of it is being computed. Under this enactment chaplains and foreign service messengers, for example, have five years added to their service, certain judges in oriental countries have ten years. Again, under an Act of 1876, service in unhealthy climates may be reckoned at the rate of two years' service counting for three; and this enactment seems to be interpreted with a fair amount of liberality, seeing that Nagasaki, Tokio, and Yokohama in Japan, Pekin and other towns in China, Porto Rico, and Rio de Janeiro are listed as unhealthy places for the purpose of this higher rate of pension. Further, though the superannuation allowance to Civil servants ceases with the pensioner's death, provision is made in an Act of 1887 for the granting to a man's widow, mother, or children, of gratuities or annual allowances where the servant dies from injuries received in the discharge or attributable to the nature of his duty. And if he does not die from those injuries, an allowance or gratuity may be made to him.

To return to the ordinary rate of pension. Let me try to give the reader who has not the fortune to be in His Majesty's Civil Service an idea of what this pension is worth. Retirement from old age does not in practice occur at a fixed period in the Civil Service; it may begin at sixty, but Civil Service work is usually so easy that many men keep on for much longer. For example, looking through the Estimates for 1902–3, I find a dragoman, with a salary of £750 a year, remaining in the Service until he is seventy-two. In 1901, the Public Accounts Committee had before it the case of a foreign service messenger retained up to the age of seventy-six. But let us, for the purposes of calculation, take the age of permissive retirement—namely, sixty. We will now look at the Foreign Office Salary List, and will take thence two offices as examples of the higher and lower grades of service—the chief clerk and the second-division clerks. The chief clerk's salary rises to £1,200 a year; his retiring pension will, therefore, be £800 a year. The second-division clerks have a maximum of £350 a year; their retiring pensions would be £233. Now, the chief clerk would answer in private life to the manager of an ordinary City office or a moderately successful professional man; for the purposes of his post he certainly would not require more ability than either. But the City or professional man, desiring at the age of sixty to retire upon a pension of £800 a year, would, if at that age he purchased a Government annuity, have to put down a lump sum of £9,106. To have saved that amount during his working life out of an income rising from the small beginnings of a young man to £1,200 a year, with probably the expense and upbringing of a family in between, would denote both a very considerable amount of thrift and a good share of luck besides. It would mean an average saving of £227 a year for forty years—for just this one purpose only, be it remembered; and during the greater number of those years it would be fair to assume that the man's salary would be less than half the £1,200 maximum, while the expenses of his family would, if he had one of normal proportions, eat heavily into his income during the whole period.

The second-division clerk, with his retiring allowance of £233, would correspond to the ordinary clerk of commerce, but better paid; I wonder how many among these latter would be able to pay £2,675, which is the price of a Government annuity of £233 at the age of sixty.

The above gives a fairly vivid notion of the sort of gift which the taxpayers make to the country's Civil servants under the present pension system. A further view may be gained from the fact that, as was put in evidence before the Royal Commission on Civil Establishments, the present non-effective list of the Civil Service (that is to say, the Pension and Compensation List) is equal to from sixteen to twenty per cent. of the effective list, the lower percentage excluding, the higher including compensations. Taking the lower level, we learn, then, that the country through the pension system really pays to its Civil servants sixteen per cent. more than their salaries. So, when we are trying to find out whether Civil servants are properly or overpaid, by comparison with the incomes earned outside the Civil Service, we have to add sixteen per cent. to the Civil servants' salary because of this pension arrangement.

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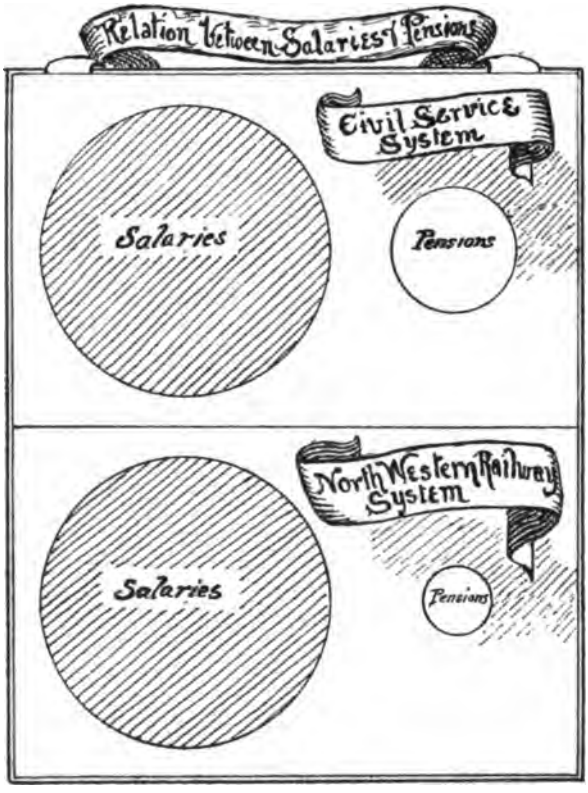
Now, this sixteen per cent. must be carefully borne in mind in another point of view, which I will now lay before you. An even better system of pensions might be given to Civil servants at a considerably less cost to the country than the present system entails. This may sound an extraordinary statement, but if you will read on, I think you will agree that it is proved. I will ask you to look at the system of superannuation adopted by the London and North-Western Railway Company for its salaried staff. The soundness of the North-Western Railway's



Superannuation Fund has emerged triumphant from all criticism; it has been carefully and even relentlessly examined, and it is now regarded as the model which other companies and public bodies copy or towards which they endeavour to approximate.

The salient features of this Fund are as follows. Each salaried servant of the Company becomes a member of the Fund Association upon his entering the service. He contributes towards it 2½ per cent. of his salary for the time being, that sum being deducted from his salary payment each month. The Company contributes an equal amount. The Company also makes use of the Fund's balance, and allows the Fund 4 per cent. interest upon the money. (As this rate is a little generous, it may be regarded as a small addition to the Company's contributions.)

Should the member, before attaining the superannuation age (sixty years permissive, at sixty-five compulsory), resign the service or be dismissed therefrom for any reason except fraud, the whole of his own contributions to the Fund is returned to him. Should he die before superannuation, his representatives receive the whole of his contributions and the whole of the Company's contributions besides, or one half-year's average salary, whichever is the greater sum. After superannuation, should the member die before he has received by way of pension the total of his own and the Company's contributions, the difference between what he has received and the total of his own and the Company's contributions is paid to his representatives.

But supposing that the member remains in the Company's service until sixty, or, if he chooses, until sixty-five, he gets upon retiring a pension calculated upon his average salary and the number of years of his service. If he has only served ten years, his superannuation is 22¾ per cent.; eleven years, 25 per cent., and so on; forty-five years' service would give him 109 per cent. of his average salary, and above that in proportion; and as fifteen is a common age for entering the service, it will be seen that members may easily attain to a length of service exceeding forty-five years. But note particularly the scale at forty years' service, as that is the number of years we have been talking about in the case of the Civil Service pensioners. Upon retirement after forty years' service, the North-Western Superannuation Fund gives the pensioner an annual allowance equal to 94½ per cent. of his average salary.

Now let us make an illustrative comparison between this system and the Civil Service pension system. We will take the case of a second-division clerk in the Civil Service, who gradually rises to a maximum salary of £350 a year, and is eligible to retire at sixty upon a pension of £233. A North-Western railway clerk whose salary had

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followed the same course would at sixty be entitled to retire with a pension equal to 94½ per cent. of his average salary during the forty years' service. That average salary would be £213; his pension would be £201. In this case the Civil Service clerk would have an advantage of £32 a year over the railway clerk. But if each clerk, as so many do, elected to remain on in his employment until the age of sixty-five, the position then would be reversed. The Civil Service clerk would still retire upon £233, but the railway clerk, under the system outlined above, would —assuming that his salary did not increase during the last five years—have increased his average salary to £230, and would be entitled to a pension of 109 per cent. of that sum, equal to £250 a year. Speaking generally, therefore, the two systems, in respect to pensions, are approximately equal in their benefits; but when the death insurance mentioned above as a part of the North-Western Superannuation Fund scheme is added, the advantage lies with the railway system; for there is no death allowance in the Civil Service, only occasionally given compassionate allowances.

There is one point, however, in which the Civil Service clerk has the advantage; he contributes nothing to his pension; the railway clerk contributes 2½ per cent. But I submit that it is only right that the future pensioner should contribute towards his pension. Why should the Civil servant be exempted altogether from the duty of providing for his old age? If he is asked to do as the railway servant does—and, it may be added, as the servants of the London County Council and other administrative bodies and the London School Board also do—that is, contribute half the money to provide his pension, he is still twice as well off as the ordinary individual outside the Civil or municipal or railway services, who has to provide for his old age entirely out of his own resources.

I know of the Civil servant's argument, that pensions represent deferred pay, and that if pensions were removed or the servants themselves had to contribute towards them, their salaries would have to be higher. That argument contains an obvious and bold implication, and before it can be accepted there will be required clear demonstration that Civil servants are worse paid than persons of like capacities, undertaking like work, in private life. And that demonstration is hard to make.

But, leaving that aspect of the matter for the present—assuming even that it is right that the taxpayers should pay the whole of the money required for Civil Service pensions—we yet see, from the comparison between the Civil Service system and the North-Western Railway system, that as good a system as—if not a better than—the present Civil Service system might exist at less cost to the country. The cost of the Civil Service system is equivalent to 16 per cent. of the salaries; the cost of the Railway system is only 5 per cent., plus the small addition I have referred to regarding the rate of interest upon the funds. I will not go so far as to say that the Government could give the same benefits as the North-Western Railway Company at the same cost, since the North-Western Superannuation Fund accumulates interest at the rate of 4 per cent. by lending its balances at that rate to the Company, and Government investments of funds (as, for example, the investments of the Savings Bank funds) only yield a little more than 2½ per cent. But without in the least stretching the bounds of prudence, the investment of Government Funds might be extended to such securities as Colonial and Municipal Bonds, so as to bring the yield up to a full 3 per cent. And the difference between 3 and 4 per cent. interest upon accumulated funds does not represent the difference between the cost of the Civil Service pensions as compared with the cost of the North-Western Railway superannuation scheme. Were the Government to follow, in respect to the Civil Service, the plan of the North-Western Railway, as local authorities are following it, the Civil servants—even without contributing themselves towards their pensions—might still enjoy just as good a superannuation scheme, and the taxpayer would at the same time be substantially relieved. And were the Civil servant made to contribute himself, the saving to the country would be a good many hundreds of thousands of pounds a year.

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THE FARMER'S DAUGHTER.

By Montagu Barstow.

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UNSOLVED.

By IAN MACLAREN.*

No. V.—GHOSTLY COUNSEL.

HEN it came to Parker's turn to tell his experience in the smoking-room, he showed some desire to cancel the contract and to escape his obligation, which was most unbecoming conduct in our only man of business.

"You see," he explained, "I am not a soldier who has had adventures, or a writing man who has got imagination; till five years ago I was a corn merchant in Liverpool, and spent my time in the rather exciting but also very prosaic occupation of buying wheat if I thought it was going to rise, and selling it if I thought it was going to fall. My capital was not large, and the market was apt to play the fool with the wisest—my wisdom was not monumental—so that from time to time I had bad luck, and once at least I was in a tight place. If it came to adventures on the market, and the romance of success and failure in speculation, I could tell some rather interesting yarns; but the Corn Exchange does not suggest the Unseen Universe. I think our only point of contact with the supernatural is our futures, which are sometimes shadowy enough, and occasionally haunt a man with far more terror than any ghost"

"Quite so, Parker," said our host; "but you left corn, and you have been living in that country house of yours, which looks like a hotel for ghosts, with its secret staircase in the wall, its hidden door in the panels, those lonely rooms in the tower, and that vault beneath the dining-room. Come now, own up. Has not some laird of the past dropped in when things were quiet, to see what kind of man had succeeded him? Has nothing happened at Glasclune?"

"Nothing," said Parker, "I give you my word; and I confess that I am rather disappointed, for I thought that some antique of the past with a troubled conscience would have turned up to confess his sin and add a fancy value to the old castle. The place is absolutely unromantic, in spite of its holes and corners, and my life, after the excitement of the Corn Market, has sunk into dead commonplace. Golf in the daytime, and a little shooting in season, and in the evening I potter among my books and engravings, which were always my by-occupation. Very uneventful really; I think you had better call on the doctor."

"Well," said the barrister, "if you have nothing to tell, it's not your blame, and we don't want barefaced inventions; but country houses have not got a monopoly of ghosts. Some curious things have happened in London chambers, or else two or three of my friends have been uncommon liars, and I have often wondered if nothing strange occurred in those gloomy piles of mercantile offices. I remember when I was on circuit at Liverpool going down late one night to have a blow on the landing-stage after getting up a very heavy brief, and I was struck, as I came back through your corn street, with its solitude and weirdness. There did not seem to be a soul living in the whole quarter, and I could see passages opening into courts behind, and black entries where there might be all kinds of shadowy figures. I went down one passage and found myself in a well with offices rising up high on every side, a few hours ago full of life, and now silent as the grave. Then suddenly a light was turned on in a room on the third floor, and the eeriness of the situation was complete. Was it a burglar who was trying the safe and felt secure in that lonely place at that early hour of the morning? Or was it a merchant who had grown uneasy about his accounts, and had come down to see whether he were solvent or bankrupt? Or was it some cashier who was manipulating the books and carrying on a cunning fraud? Or was it a merchant who had died years ago and was drawn back to the scene of his former business? Do you know, I've never forgotten the impression as

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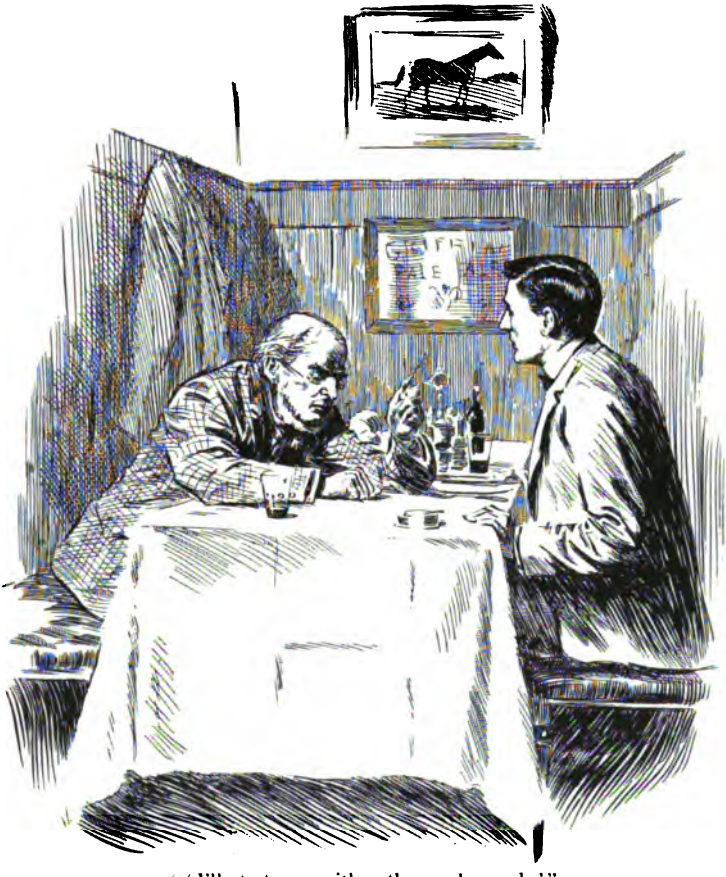
I stood in that court with its dim light—for the moon, which had been faintly shining on the river, had gone under a heavy cloud—and looked up to that room, with its mysterious occupant. But I beg your pardon. This is not 'my funeral,' as the Americans say; I've told my story already. Seriously, though, does nothing ever happen in those offices except contracts, and does nothing come in except sample-bags?"

Barristers have certainly got a way of extracting the truth, and that turned out to be a very successful cross-examination, in a quite informal fashion, for whatever might be the reason, Parker was distinctly caught by the graphic night scene and surrendered suddenly at discretion.

"No wonder," said Parker, looking at the barrister resentfully, "that witnesses break down when you take them in hand, for your way of touching on other people's secrets comes near to witchcraft. Well, it was not churlishness that kept me silent, or any suspicion that you would give me away, but simply that the story I must now tell is quite incredible, and you will be entitled to conclude either that my brain was heated through the anxiety of a business crisis, or that I had been asleep and dreamt what I supposed happened. The only evidence beyond my own testimony that I can bring forward is Glasclune and my retirement from business; for I had never blossomed from a struggling corn merchant into a modest Scots laird had it not been for a midnight experience in that very quarter the barrister so graphically described, and a certain visitor.

"Personal biography is of no use for our purpose; but if it won't bore you, I had better tell you my history and explain the state of affairs when the incident happened. My father and mother died in my childhood, and I was brought up by a guardian, with whom I lived through my boyhood, but who left Liverpool and ceased to have any responsibility for me when I came of age. As I did not know what I wanted to be, and only found out when it was too late that the one thing I cared for was the Army, my guardian, in the plenitude of his wisdom, apprenticed me to a firm of corn merchants, because, as he said, with considerable common sense, people will always want bread, and there must be corn merchants to import the material. Five years I served my time, and I came to know every turn in the rabbit-warren of offices, and something about most of the firms. When my time was up, the firm, which managed to do a large business on an economical working staff of a cashier, a book-keeper, an office boy, and seven apprentices, gave me to understand that in allowing me the run of their office, and securing from me at least



"'I'll start you with a thousand pounds.'"

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three years' good clerk work, they had done all which an enterprising firm of corn merchants could be expected to do for an apprentice, and that I must secure a situation for myself. As no situation turned up after six months' waiting, and I was now in possession of my very moderate inheritance, my guardian suggested that I should start in business for myself, and secure a senior partner who had large experience and no capital. For three years we worked together, and at the close it had come to pass that I had a very considerable amount of experience and he had all the capital. Our partnership was then dissolved, and he took what business there was into another firm, where he flourished still more abundantly, and I was left to look after myself.

"I could not start business on my own account without capital, and no one seemed particularly anxious to have me as a servant —at least, there was no frantic enthusiasm in that direction—and had it not been for a certain strange character in the corn market I would have emigrated, or, if I had not been too old, would have enlisted in a cavalry regiment. But one day, as I was hanging about the street feeling very much down on my luck, someone gripped my arm, and I found myself in the clutches of Mr. James Peebles, only partner in the firm of Peebles and Company, who described themselves as corn brokers, and had been about forty years on the market. Mr. Peebles, or 'Jimmy,' as he was known by everybody, and called by most people to his face, was a Scotsman of extraordinary keenness and equal penuriousness, was unmarried, lodged in two rooms somewhere, dined on a shilling a day, and had amassed a large fortune, which it was understood would be carefully and justly divided, with remarkable provisions against squandering, among a clan of relatives in the hard-headed county of Fife. He was dressed, as usual, in the shabby grey suit of antique cut, which it is certain he had worn for ten years, and without which he could hardly have been recognised in the City, and had the familiar stick in his left hand, for he was slightly lame, with which he tapped himself up and down stairs, in and out of offices, and through the Corn Exchange. The sound of the stick was the signal that 'Jimmy' was coming, and he used the stick to emphasise his points as he laid down the law on 'futures.' For 'Jimmy' was not really a broker going between merchants, nor was he a merchant himself, but he was a pure, unadulterated speculator, naked and not ashamed. He had one factotum in his office, another Scot called Morrison—a fierce theologian—almost as curious as himself, who kept the office open and managed such books as 'Jimmy' required; and 'Jimmy' never wanted to see any corn, and never really possessed any except on paper. He bought for the rise and he sold for the fall; he made his money between the turn of the markets, and his foresight was almost superhuman. It did not matter what operations they were carrying on in America, or what surprises they might spring, how disordered the market at home might be, or how sluggish, 'Jimmy' had a scent for what was going to happen, and gathered gain in all kinds of weather. Many a firm in past days had tried to secure his services, and had offered him the most tempting terms, but 'Jimmy' preferred his snug little office of two rooms on the ground floor at the back of Simpson's Buildings, and his independence of speech and action.

"'Weel,' said 'Jimmy,' 'it's just about the time when I take my midday bite, and if ye have no operation in hand, and don't object to share a brandered steak with an old man, we'll step round the corner to the "White Horse,"' in which ancient eating-house 'Jimmy' had filled a corner at 12.30 for more than a generation.

"'Ye've had hard times, Parker,' said 'Jimmy,' when we had broken on the steak, 'and I've been sorry for ye. I've been watchin' ye—there's not much I don't know. There was no man to guide you, and your partner was a verra clever man; mebbe too clever, as he'll find some day. Your money's gone, I am judgin', and you've nothing to start with—just so! Weel, I like your appearance, and I count that you've more brains than they think on the street, though mebbe not so much as your late partner, who has one of the biggest low-class second-rate brains I've ever lighted on. I want to make a proposeetion to you,' and 'Jimmy' was so expansive that he broke his usual rule of never drinking anything, intoxicating or non-intoxicating, except water, and ordered two bottles of barm beer.

"'Naebody knows what I'm going to tell you, and ye will be pleased to keep it quiet, but I've resolved to give up business and go back to Fife, for the doctor tells me my course is run. Morrison retires at the same time; and he's settling down at Auchtermuchty, where he'll give them trouble in the Kirk, if I'm no mistaken, for the rest of his natural life; and, as ye know, there's no business to dispose of. Na, na! The busi-

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ness of James Peebles and Company begins and ends with me and Morrison, and the office is no what ye call palatial, but it was enough for me, and I've a lease o' it for five year. I've never believed in charity, for it just helps wastrels, and if ye want a kirk ye must go to Scotland ; but I've taken a notion of doing one good deed before I retire—both ways, you know ; it will be my last "future."'

"By this time I was listening with amazement to 'Jimmy's' announcement, and imagining the excitement on the market when 'Jimmy' closed his last account.

"'What I have to propose is this. That ye take over the office at the present rent, which is moderate, and that ye do what business ye can, buyin' or sellin' as ye judge the wind to be blowin', for brokin' is only scrapin' ; and a merchant—it's no use without a big capital ; and Parker, my man, ye'll say nothing aboot it to any livin' soul, for every hospital in Liverpool'll be after me afore I get out of the city, but I'll start you with a thousand pounds.'

"Within three months I was established in 'Jimmy's' office, with a young lad as my solitary staff, and was trying my hand with 'futures.' Unfortunately it was one thing to succeed to 'Jimmy's' room, and another thing to be heir to his acuteness, and before the year was over I had lost most of my little capital and began to be in deep water. The market was in that state that if a man really could discover—which he must do by instinct—which way the tide was going to run, he could make a fortune. It seemed to me as if I were more likely to lose the few hundreds that were still left. One day I took my courage in both hands and bought heavily, so that I stood either to win several thousand pounds or to be hopelessly bankrupt. As I sat alone in my rooms that evening I fell into a panic, and indeed, I may frankly tell you men, I've never had either the nerve or the brain for the corn business, and you will understand to-night how I've come out so well. As I knew that I could not sleep, and as I had in my office a mass of papers containing reports of the American harvest, and statistics of the corn held in store there, and prophecies of the demands and supplies throughout the world, and such-like material on which speculators work, I determined about eleven o'clock to go down to the office and thresh out as best I could the question of policy. The corn quarter was certainly a lonely place when I arrived about twenty minutes to twelve, and I almost hesitated to go into the office ; but I laughed at myself as I unlocked the door, for there is not a safer place, or a quieter, than an office at midnight where there is no jewellery to rob, and no securities worth having. I sat down at my table, and now I shall describe the place as far as is necessary. It consisted of two rooms, both looking upon the court behind. One room opened into a passage leading to the street, and was the office ; my room opened out of that, and it had a door into another passage, but this I never used, and it was permanently locked. From where I sat I could see the court in daylight, and the footsteps of anyone crossing were quite clear and, indeed, resonant. For a little I felt ill at ease, for no other reason than simply the remembrance that there was not a human being in all the buildings round ; but after I had settled down to my work and had finished a comparison between the visible stock of corn in February of that year and the amount in February of the year before, and had fairly plunged into the ratio between the stock of corn and the price of corn in the different years at the same date, I was quite indifferent whether the offices round me were full or empty. I had just laid down my pencil in order to digest the figures when . . . there was a crash in the outer office, the door of which was open and into which from where I sat I could not look. What could have happened in a room which was certainly empty and a moment before was as still as death ? I crossed the floor, scratching a match as I did so, for I could not afford to have electric light, which was then being introduced. Certainly there was no one in the room. When I lit the gas, the explanation of the noise was evident : a large book in which my lad had been pasting extracts from trade journals, and which he had left on a standing desk, had taken in its head to move, and after, I suppose. some futile attempts during the evening, had succeeded with the effect of a demonstration at half past twelve. Why a book which has lain quiet for several hours will at last make for the floor, and why books do not stay still, but are perpetually in motion, is a problem I have never solved. My experience of books is that unless you have them securely fastened, they can't be kept quiet. I locked that book up in a cupboard and went back to my figures ; but the interruption had shaken my nerves, and I was conscious of listening, and as soon as you begin to listen at half past twelve in an empty building, you are bound to hear something. One minute it was the gurgling of a water-pipe which seemed to be chortling

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over my anxiety; another it was the scurrying of some mice which had got in from a neighbouring sample-room; the third it was the moaning of the wind through a ventilator, which was, of course, bewailing my approaching downfall; and the fourth it was the closing of a door which had been left open

"Someone was certainly crossing the court."

in some cellar, and whose clang echoed up from below.

"Better to go back to work and finish my calculations, then a walk home through the keen winter air to brace me up. Really, I said to myself, I am getting childish, for now I started at the sound of a step in the passage into which the outer office opened, and jumped out of the chair when there came a loud and imperious knock on the outer office door. Who could be in Simpson's Buildings at this preposterous hour, and what did he want with me? When the knock came again, I went through the office, and standing carefully within the locked door, demanded 'Who is there?' 'Open the door!' was the answer, with the addition 'Police,' and in an instant I was face to face with a constable, lamp in hand, who had seen the light at the unusual hour and wished to be sure that no mischief was being done. When I had satisfied him with thanks for his vigilance and a trifle for his trouble, and his steps had died away across the court down an opposite passage, I felt more nervous than ever, and lonelier. Hurriedly finishing my review, and leaving it for the open air to decide upon my course next day, I had risen to put on my coat, when I heard coming, as far as I could judge, through the passage by which the constable had left, and entering upon the court, a step I knew well, which indeed was different to any other man's. It was not only the sound of a foot, but the tap of a stick. Was my mind failing, or had sitting in 'Jimmy's' office filled me with imaginations, for I could have sworn by the sound that 'Jimmy' was again among his old haunts? Under an irresistible impulse, I turned out the gas and went over to the window. Someone, and that was all I could see, was certainly crossing the court in the direction of our office, and the tapping grew every moment more distinct.

"Why, of course, it would be 'Jimmy.' Three days before I had written to him and asked him his opinion of the market, for although he communicated with no person and did no business, but was understood to be working a small farm, I knew he received every paper and report in the department of corn, and that the old warrior would always keep his eye on the battlefield. I was careful not to tell him that I was anxious, lest he should think that I was simply begging, but simply gave him news and invited any suggestions he might make. He had not replied, and I was beginning to conclude that he did not wish to take any responsibility. I was not astonished, for 'Jimmy' was not likely to involve himself

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"'Go on selling till ye hear that Jeffrey of Chicago has begun to buy.'"

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in a hazardous campaign with which he had nothing to do, but I did feel that after his kindness he might have given me a word of advice. I had done the old man an injustice, for now it was plain that instead of writing, he had come up in person to Liverpool and, no doubt in keeping with his policy of secrecy, had arrived by the last train about twelve o'clock. Then having learned at my rooms where I had gone, for I had told my landlady lest she should be alarmed, he had been nothing loth to follow me down to the old place. He was just the man to enjoy a visit *incognito*, and I felt grateful for his trouble. All this flashed through my mind as the dim figure crossed the court, and before the tapping had actually come to our side, I had reached the office door to bid 'Jimmy' welcome; but when I opened it, there was no one in the passage. I looked up and down: no 'Jimmy.' I went out to the court: no sound there, and so far as I could see, no person. Then I went back to the office, and when I entered my room, the first sight I saw was 'Jimmy' sitting in his own chair at the table. Of course, I had forgotten the door from the other passage into the private room, and I remembered now that 'Jimmy' used to reach his room that way when he did not wish to show himself on the market, lest he should be questioned, and in order that Morrison, who 'tasted' freely but told no lies, might be able to say that he was not in. He was dressed in the old suit and looked haggard, as if fatigued by his long journey, and he did not encourage any salutations, but plunged at once into business.

"'Your letter came when I was—engaged, and I did not get free till to-day, and now I've come to tell you to sell to-morrow and go on selling till ye hear that Jeffrey of Chicago has begun to buy. Close your accounts then, laddie, and ye'll be a rich man. Bring me your books.'

"When I returned into the office with the ledger, 'Jimmy' was gone, having left by the private door, of which he had evidently kept a key, and which he had locked after him. When I hurried round by the other passage, I could not find him in the court; and when I went through to the street, he was not there. There were many ways by which he could elude me; and when next morning he did not appear at my lodgings, I was not greatly surprised, for it would only be like 'Jimmy' to come and go in mystery. I followed his advice during the day, and in the evening stood to win a considerable sum, for the market still was falling. Before I went to bed I wrote him a grateful letter, thanking him for his infallible advice, but scolding him for not letting me thank him, and the morning following I received a letter from Morrison which I can give *verbatim*.

"'My dear Sir,—Your letter came four days ago, and was read by Mr. Peebles. He intended to answer it at once, but had a stroke two hours afterwards, and never said anything again which we could understand. We thought that he was troubled about the letter, but he could give no directions. He died last night without pain at a quarter to one, and I thought it right to inform you, as he always used to speak in kindly terms about you.'

"How it came to pass, I do not know; but what came to pass, so far as I saw, I have told you, and I had so little doubt that somehow 'Jimmy' had been anxious to help me, that I continued selling on a large scale even when others were afraid to do anything, till one day news came from Chicago that Jeffrey was again a bull. From that hour I never bought or sold a single cental, but wound up my business and invested the proceeds in Glasclune and some railway stock, and am fairly comfortable.

"I ought to add that before 'Jimmy' left Liverpool we spent an evening together, and he declared his intense satisfaction with commercial life.

"'I'll no deny,' he summed up, 'but that corn is a grand business if ye're sure how the market's going. I doubt that Pittenweem 'ill be wearisome, and I'm feared at times that I'll not be at home in the next world itself, unless I'm allowed to try just one operation.' And 'Jimmy' accomplished one on the largest scale."

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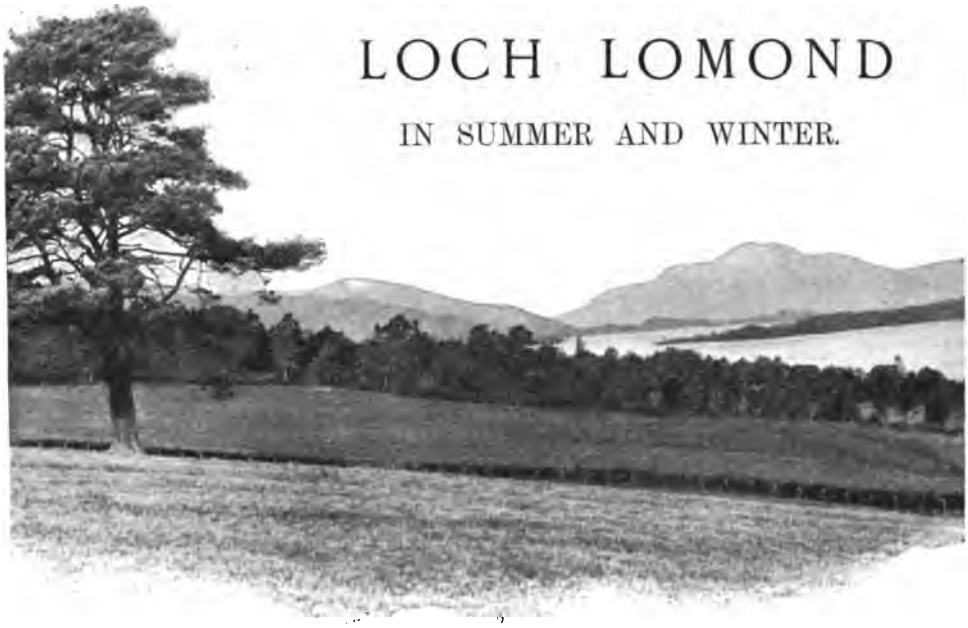
LOCH LOMOND

IN SUMMER AND WINTER.



By James Strang.

By yon bonnie banks an' by yon bonnie braes,
Where the sun shines bright on Loch Lomon';
Where me and my true love were ever wont to gae,
On the bonnie, bonnie banks o' Loch Lomon'.
O, ye'll tak' the high road an' I'll tak' the low road,
An' I'll be in Scotland before ye;
But me an' my true love will never meet again
On the bonnie, bonnie banks o' Loch Lomon'.

IN this beautiful and pathetic Scots song there is something more than the cry of a lover for his mistress. It is the passionate yearning of an exiled Scot for his "ain countrie," and for all the memories that cling to it, of which none are more movingly insurgent to him than the vanished days and nights on the shores of the great loch enfolded by the mountains of the West. Full of delights for lovers, still and peaceful as Loch Lomond is to-day—save when Nature makes wild war in battling storm—it has its tempestuous, historic past. Tradition has it that when King Arthur was making war in Scotland, his defeated foemen retired from the Clyde to Loch Lomond and took refuge on the islands in the lake. In later days, the islands proved sorry shelters from the red rage of Haco, the Norwegian king who afterwards came by his deserts at Largs, at the hand of Alexander III. Haco's Vikings ascended Loch Long, and dragged their small boats across the narrow strip of land which divides at Arrochar the salt waters of Loch Long from the fresh waters of Loch Lomond. On the islands of the lake many people had sought refuge from the sea-rovers, and the sudden incursion of the Norsemen took them completely by surprise. Sword and fire wrought cruel havoc, leaving death and smoking ruin behind them.

We are on more familiar ground when we come to the days when the Highland clans dealt out death to each other with claymore and dirk. Glen Fruin (the Glen of Sorrow) is to-day a quiet land of fertile acres and homely farmsteads, through which the river Fruin flows with many curvings until it shoots under a bridge which spans the highway with a sharp arch, when it stretches itself in a marvellously straight line for the loch, between banks crowned with dense thickets. But in 1602, Glen Fruin was the scene of a bloody battle between the Colquhouns and MacGregors. Victory rested with the MacGregors, but was far more disastrous to them than defeat was to the vanquished, for as a result of their savage butchery it was made punishable by death to bear the name of MacGregor, or to give food or shelter to any of the clan. The penal enactments against them were only

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THE RIVER FRUIN ENTERING LOCH LOMOND.

repealed by Charles II., in return for the loyalty shown by the tribesmen to his father.

But we may pass now from these "old, unhappy, far-off things and battles long ago," which seem, after all, but misty dreams, full of ghostly echoes and shadowy forms, as one joys in the springtime of the year or the flush of summer-tide on "the bonnie, bonnie banks o' Loch Lomon'." Their witcheries are scarce ever more compelling than when—

> The wee birdies sing an' the wild flowers spring,
> An' in sunshine the waters are sleepin'.

Although, perhaps, still more sure and subtle is their glamour in the dusky glow of the sweet summer twilight—

> Where in purple hue the Hielan' hills we view,
> An' the moon comin' out in the gloamin'.

The beauties of Loch Lomond and its shores far surpass those of Loch Katrine and the Trossachs, to which the genius of Sir Walter Scott has given what may be called, in modern language, a "literary boom." No prettier corner can be found in broad Scotland than the picturesque little village of Luss, nestling under its flanking hills, with the spire of the parish church rising above the tall trees which surround its quiet "God's acre," along one side of which the Luss Water washes rippling past, crystal-clear, over its clean bed of grey-blue slate. In front of the village is the Loch, with the slopes of the Aldochly hills rising on the further side; to the south-east it overlooks the broad lower expanse of the Loch, dotted with wooded islands, to the red Conic Hill of Balmaha and the far Killearn hills; while to the north-east it looks out across the water upon "the steep, steep side o' Ben Lomon'."

It is not so much to its supremacy of height, 3,192 feet, as of position, that "the Ben"—as it is familiarly termed throughout the West of Scotland—owes its distinction, with which something of affectionate pride is mingled in popular regard. It stands magnificently isolated from the clustering giants that rise in more towering grandeur to the north, and uplifts boldly on the verge of the great tract of undulating lowlands which

LUSS: VIEW TOWARDS BALMAHA.

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LUSS: WITH INCH TAVANACH.

THE FALLS OF INVERSNAID.

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sweeps away to the south, the east, and the west. The "steep, steep side" is in reality at the back of the mountain, above where the Forth rises as a tiny moorland stream, nut-brown amid the peaty moss. The writer once leapt lightly across this, in making an ascent of Ben Lomond from the eastern side—after a long walk across the moors from Stronachlacher on Loch Katrine—to descend on the Loch Lomond side at Rowardennan. It is from the latter place that the climb is usually made, by a well-defined park which presents no difficulties, and personal experience has proved that the ascent and descent can here be made without any pressure, within four hours. On another occasion, however, when the climb had also been made from Rowardennan, an attempt to take a short cut back by "the corrie" resulted in devious wanderings. More than once it has chanced that ambitious Vale of Leven youths who have rowed up from Balloch overnight, and climbed "the Ben" to see the sun rise, have found themselves wrapped round in the sunless dawn with blinding and baffling mist, through which they have groped their way downwards only to discover that they had descended on the wrong side, and were weary miles from their boat or any other connecting link with civilisation.

Wordsworth's poetic picture of Inversnaid is no doubt very beautiful, and there is the charm of delightful quietude in—

> These grey rocks; this household lawn;
> These trees, a veil just half withdrawn;
> This fall of water that doth make
> A murmur near the quiet lake.

Yet it is a picture apt to be disappointing to the tourist, for should he see the fall at its best, he has surely been a victim to the rains of this moist region, and infected in consequence with an ill humour. Or if he has the good fortune to come hither during one of the dry summer spells, which are as uncertain as they are glorious, he will find the fall shrunken by drought to such a paltry insignificance that it is bereft of even the semblance of a murmur.

It is still further up the lake, at its extreme head, that the most profound deeps of solemn quietude are to be found, where Ardlin lies cradled at the foot of Glen Falloch among the girdling mountains. A Sunday spent there years ago in a gamekeeper's cottage stands out from many memories of Loch-

BALLOCH: RIVER LEVEN LEAVING THE LOCH.

lomondside. Divine service was held in the little schoolhouse by the lochside, and thither the shepherds brought their collies with them. The collies were quiet, sagacious brutes, and crouched most decorously at their masters' feet, even when praise was being sung in a fashion which would have set less philosophic or more fastidious dogs howling in agonising chorus. One collie, however, possibly young and thoughtless, made its way up to the preacher while he was engaged in prayer, and sniffed suspiciously around his bagged trouser-legs, after which—either fearing his master or distrusting the preacher—he made his melancholy way out. It was a peerless summer's day. The schoolhouse door was left wide open. Around the doorway pigeons fluttered and strutted with drowsy cooings: through it one could see

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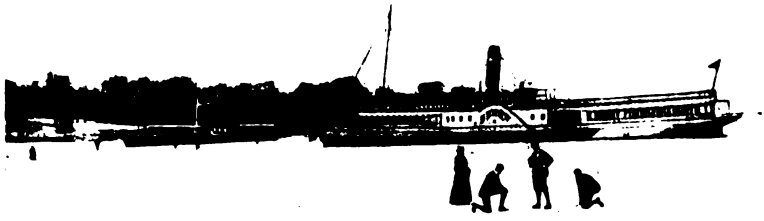
the blue waters gleaming in the sunshine, and the hills shimmering through the quivering heat. As one luxuriated in idleness afterwards outside, on that perfect day of slumberous summer heat, not a sound was to be heard but the faint bleat of a sheep on the hillside, or the chirring of grasshoppers in the dry grass. Here, where the heather crept down to the edge of a dry watercourse, grew the golden spikes of the asphodel. There, where the stubbly rushes were ranked, were clumps of the sweet-scented bog-myrtle; and in moist, mossy places lurked the beaded sun-dew. This is one of the few nooks in Scotland where the glow-worm is to be found, and at night its tiny lamp may be seen shining softly forth from the roadside banks.



BALLOCH: STEAMER FROZEN IN CAMERON BAY.

SKATING ON LOCH LOMOND.

CYCLING AND CURLING ON LOCH LOMOND.

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The glory of the lower end of the lake, between Balloch and Rowardennan, is the wonderland of its islands. Out from Luss is Inch Lonaig (Yew Island), so called from the clumps of yews which darken its green slopes, and which tradition says were planted there by Bruce to supply his men with bows to match against those of the English archers. It was when rowing home from this island, where he had been shooting deer for distribution among his tenantry at Christmastide, that Sir James Colquhoun, eleventh baronet of Colquhoun and Luss, was drowned, along with four of his gamekeepers, on 18th December, 1873. It is believed that the boat was struck by one of the sudden squalls which, suddenly tearing across the waters from one or other of the gusty glens, make Loch Lomond dangerous for small craft, unless a most careful look-out is kept.

LOCH LOMOND IN FLOOD: CAMERON LODGE SURROUNDED.

One of the prettiest "bits" on Loch Lomond is the narrow strait winding between Inch Connachan (Colquhoun Island) and Inch Tavanach (Monk's Island), which is said to have been the residence of St. Kersog. If so, the saint is to be congratulated upon his good taste. The shores between which the strait winds are wooded to the water's edge, and slope upwards on either side to lofty heights, dark with the towering plumes of spruce and Scotch fir, among which in spring the tender green of scattered larches shows softly. It is a reposeful delight to moor your boat to the shore here on a summer's eve, when the white and gold of the water-lilies gleam upon the water, and the northern heavens between the purpling hills grow luminous with the wondrous glow of the spreading twilight. And when the round moon rises and the stars come out, it is like drifting through some fairyland of dreams to paddle slowly back to Luss, with the rugged mountains softened by creeping shadow, the islands slumbering peacefully on the bosom of the Loch, and the water gurgling musically about the boat's bows, and rippling away astern where the starlight trembles dimly in the wake.

Inch Caillach (Nun's Island) lies on the eastern side of the lake, and is separated by a narrow channel from Balmaha Pier, the first at which the steamers call after leaving Balloch. Balmaha is in the country of the Duke of Montrose, the towers of whose lordly home, Buchanan Castle, rise amid the woods a few miles away and overlook the fertile strath of the Endrick. This river carries down with it a rich deposit of silt, with which it makes broad and shifting shoals where it enters the Loch. Inch Caillach, to which one can row across in a few minutes from Balmaha, is an enchanted isle of shadow-flecked vistas and sweet silences. Landing in a little bay almost opposite Balmaha Pier, you ascend a gentle slope by a winding path which leads, between waist-high brackens and through a forest of birches and dwarf oaks, to a little graveyard where the mouldering bones of the ancient clansmen find kindly sepulture in solitude. The graveyard is old and neglected; its low walls are moss-

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LOCH LOMOND FROZEN OVER: BEN LOMOND AND CORNER OF INCH MURRIN.

grown and crumbling; the lettering upon the more ancient stones is undecipherable; nettles and thistles flourish in rank luxuriance. Yet here in summer's prime the scented honeysuckle trails over the walls, and above the rank grass from which the tombstones rise the pink wild roses swing to the passing breeze. The cry of a wandering gull floats down as it poises against the blue; the coo of the cushats makes a mournful monotone in the woods. There is nought to disturb even less undreaming sleepers than those who slumber here so soundly, and whose dirge is sung by the wild winds on nights of winter storm as they sweep through the tossing branches of the great firs which crown the near crag rising sheer from the shore. There are not wanting significant signs, however, in this solitude of the dead, of the savage days of foray and onset when the dirk and broadsword did their bloody work among the Highland hills. On the top of an exposed stone coffin is carved a sword, and the device is repeated on a red sandstone slab which has been dragged from a grave by some vandal and now lies snapped in twain among the nettles.

Inch Murrin, which possibly derives its name from St. Mirren, to whom the abbey church of Paisley was dedicated, is the largest island on Loch Lomond, and also the most southerly, being the nearest to Balloch, from which it is some three miles distant. The island is about three miles in circumference, and on the Boturich side tourists with sharp eyes or good field-glasses may see the posts which mark the measured mile for the Loch steamers. Perched on a knoll on the south-west point of the island are the ruins of Lennox Castle, shown in the illustration of Inch Murrin in winter, the snow-clad mountain in the background being Ben

ISLAND OF INCH MURRIN, WITH BEN LOMOND IN BACKGROUND.

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Lomond. The great house of Lennox long held sway over wide lands at the southern end of Loch Lomond, and for a time kept high state at Balloch Castle, once the chief seat of the family, but no vestige of it remains. Balloch, however, seems to have been forsaken for Inch Murrin by the Lennoxes after the ruthless blow delivered against the family by James I., in the execution of Duncan, the seventh Earl of Lennox, and the Duke of Albany, whom the Earl's daughter, Isobel, had married. Inch Murrin was among the places visited by James I. when he was in Scotland in 1617, and there is a curious and interesting letter from Ludovic, second Duke of Lennox, to his "very good Lord, the Lord of Kilsyth," Sir William Livingstone, in connection with its preparations for the King's coming. In the letter, which is dated from Glasgow, 23rd July, 1617, Sir William is informed that the King "hath concluded to dine at Inchmurrin, where his dinner shall be sent, and there are tents to be provyded for that effect as you told me; and you must expect a good nombre of sharpe stomaches. You must take some care also that boats may be in readiness against his Matie come hither; so I rest your loving friende, Lenox."

Inch Murrin is now used as a deer-preserve by the Duke of Montrose, whose gamekeeper occupies a cottage below the knoll on which the ruins of Lennox Castle stand. It is a favourite landing-place for boating parties, and many are the joyous picnics which have been held on the greensward beside the ruined walls within which one of Scotland's proudest nobles once entertained his sovereign. The Duke's deer-island swarms with adders, which, like the deer, not infrequently defy their watery confines and adventure into the loch. Both are good swimmers. The Inch Murrin deer have been known to swim across to the Boturich shore, while the deer on Sir James Colquhoun's island of Inch Lonaig frequently swim across to Strathcashill Point, on the eastern shore. The rabbits on the islands are also migrants, but this is in the rare winters when the Loch is frozen over, when they scutter across upon the ice from one island to another.

The shores of Loch Lomond in winter are a *terra incognita* to the tourist. Nor is this surprising, for it can be as grim and forbidding then as it is attractive in summer. Sometimes, in a wet winter, the Loch rises to an extraordinary height, flooding and making impassable the high-road where it runs along the shore. There are great variations between its summer and winter levels. In the winter of 1893-4, Loch Lomond rose to a greater height than it had reached for 103 years. The difference between this and the lowest recorded level was no less than 8 feet 5 inches. In the illustration, the North Lodge of Cameron House is shown, with the avenue under water.

It is only in exceptionally severe winters that the broad expanse of Loch Lomond's southern waters is frozen over, while the longest and hardest frost cannot flow over the black deeps of its northern narrows. It may be of interest to note that the sister lake, Loch Katrine, from which the City of Glasgow draws its water supply, never freezes over to "bearing" point, although it is 300 feet higher than Loch Lomond. During the past quarter of a century Loch Lomond has only been "bearing" five times, which is not wonderful when it is considered that to freeze the lake there must not only be a severe and unrelaxing frost prolonged for weeks, but a complete absence of wind, which generally means days of dense white fog, under whose chill brooding the freezing of the Loch goes on stealthily and silently. In the winter of 1874-5, Loch Lomond was frozen—and the word must throughout be taken here as meaning "bearing"—for three days. The ice was in splendid condition, but on the afternoon of New Year's Day, 1875, a heavy snowstorm came on. The writer, who was skating in mid-loch when the storm began, promptly headed for the shore, as did others. Those who lingered had most unpleasant experiences, completely losing their reckoning on the wide, white tract, being baffled and bewildered by the blinding and whirling flakes. In 1879, the Loch was frozen from 12th January to 27th February, and again, strangely enough, in the following winter. On this occasion—1880-1—it was frozen for over five weeks, and there was a magnificent sheet of ice as far up as Camstradden Bay, about eight miles from Balloch and a short mile below Luss, above which it was supposed that the Loch could never freeze—a popular delusion which was dispelled during the next great frost, that of 1895. The result of that winter's phenomenal severity was that Loch Lomond was frozen over for nearly two months. The ice began to bear on the 10th of January, and the last walkers and skaters were upon it as late as the 4th of March. Beginning at Balloch, it stretched from shore to shore, girdling and clasping the islands as far north as Rowardennan, some

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miles above Luss. At the foot of Ben Lomond the ice ended sharply and completely, leaving a clean edge running across from Inverbeg to Rowardennan, above which the open water stretched blackly away between the mountains to Ardlin, its surface alive with water-fowl.

It need hardly be said that skaters who adventure recklessly upon ice which covers such awful gulfs do so at the peril of their lives. Several fatal accidents have occurred, while the hair-breadth escapes have been numerous. Even when the ice is bearing well, there are always treacherous spots, notably where currents run, springs bubble up, or streams push into the Loch. The islanders naturally welcome their first visitors across the ice, as it is a sign that communication with the shore is restored, and will last till the thaw begins. On Loch Murrin the earliest skaters to arrive are presented with a trophy of deer's antlers, as a "reward for valour." When Loch Lomond is frozen over for a long period, the water in falling away shrinks from the ice, which has, in consequence, great strain put upon it. Booming reverberations signal the tremendous cracks which split the ice as it relieves the strain by settling down. The pressure against each other of the edges of these great cracks forces them upwards from the water. The ridges of ice thus formed rot rapidly and collapse, leaving long fissures a foot or more in width. The lower end of frozen Loch Lomond, when once the ice is surely and safely bearing, presents a beautiful and animated scene, day after day, while the light lasts. Skaters flit hither and thither, bold cyclists dare dangerous side-slips, cautious pedestrians make a long procession between Balloch and Loch Murrin, and the roaring game of curling goes on amid the shouts of the players on carefully swept rinks. Over all, robed with the radiant snows, uplifts the great Ben, dignified with a new majesty, while the Luss hills and the slopes above Balmaha loom near and vast as they gleam whitely in the winter sunshine.

THE HEART AND THE SOUL.

MY garden was broad, and the flowers were fair,
And the glittering lawns were gay,
And my Heart and my Soul were walking there,
In the blaze of a Summer's Day.

And my Heart leapt high in the Morning's pride,
And he lilted a lightsome lay;
And he said, "O Soul! how the World is wide,
And how brave is a Summer's Day!"

Yet my gloomy Soul said never a word,
But she moodily took her way,
For God made the Soul for Eternity,
And the Heart for a Summer's Day!

HOWEL SCRATTON.

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A SPANISH BEAUTY.

FROM A PAINTING BY J. CASADO.

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BY THE BLACK DEEP.

By R. Austin Freeman and Ashdown Piers.

"The Blockade of Buenos Ayres.

"(*Reuter's Special Service.*)

"Barbadoes, June 1st.

"The four-masted ship *Jane and Elizabeth*, with linseed from Buenos Ayres, put in here yesterday for stores and water, and sailed to-day for London, all well. She reported having successfully passed through the blockading fleet on the night of May 9th."

Thus the *Daily Telegraph*, and as the sun shone through the high office window, and flashed again from the tiny sample bottles of essential oils, it only heightened the dismal expression upon the face of Jenkinson Brothers. When people spoke of Jenkinson Brothers, the oldest established firm of drug merchants in Mincing Lane, they meant Josiah. Now, Josiah was ambitious, also he was young when he became the sole representative of the firm. The fluctuations of *ipecacs* and *cumquats* soon ceased to interest him; he forsook humdrum lines of business and wandered into crooked paths of speculation, until he now found himself the possessor of a seriously diminished credit and a capital which had almost ceased to exist. He had long meditated a bold stroke which should revive the sensitive plant of his credit and rob settling-day of some of its terrors, when the failure of the linseed crop of 1899 gave him his opportunity. Linseed, as a general rule, is not an article that can be cornered, but on this occasion everything conspired to render him assistance. A parasite, spreading with extraordinary rapidity from the East, had devastated the Russian crops, whilst a succession of typhoons in the Sundas and adjoining islands made short work of the large reserves which had been accumulated there. Men's eyes turned towards the New World. Argentina stepped into the breach, and every ship that had room on her manifest soon overflowed with the now precious seed; but before a single one could clear from Buenos Ayres a revolution broke out. The five-hundred-and-twentieth president took refuge in the city, and was there besieged by the Army, who had turned their general into the five-hundred-and-twenty-first; whilst the Navy, following the lead of the Army, declared for the insurgents and straightway blockaded the harbour.

It was now that Josiah, in daring mood, aspired to control the market. At first he bought cautiously and quietly; then, emboldened by success, with less and less caution, and as the price soared upwards he continued to buy, until at length the magnitude of the deal reached a figure that he trembled to contemplate. It was a small matter to him that the older men in the market looked askance at his operations; he was regarded with admiration by the smaller fry of speculators, and as they deferentially made way for him in the Lane, visions of a yacht, a country estate, and even—why not?—a seat in Parliament, floated before his eyes.

But these golden dreams were short-lived. On this particular morning of June, 1899, the price of linseed had beaten the record within the memory of the oldest broker. Already there were rumours of synthetical substitutes in the market. The crisis called for all Josiah's nerve, and he was about to commence the interesting zoological process known as "squeezing the bears" (in other words, to demand the impossible feat of delivering the seed of which he was the nominal purchaser), when his eye fell on Reuter's message; and as he read, the room swam round him.

"Captain Jenkinson to see you, sir."

At any other time Josiah would have replied with one of the numerous excuses which people find for invisibility to an impecunious relation, but at present he was too confused to do more than gaze stupidly at his visitor, who had followed close on the heels of the clerk, and took a chair without waiting to be invited.

Captain Jenkinson wore a beard trimmed in the naval style known as "torpedo-fashion," but his dress showed none of a sailor's neatness. On his jacket, some buttons were odd and some were missing, whilst the whole suit gave evidence of having suffered many things from the elements; his eyes were shaded by a cap from which the house

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badge had disappeared; his linen, what there was to be seen of it, was frayed and grubby; his boots were cracked, also he exhaled an atmosphere of rank cigars. Altogether, Captain Jenkinson presented an out-at-elbow appearance, as he sat regarding the drug merchant with a half-defiant, half-curious air. At length, feeling the silence oppressive—

"Jos," he said emphatically, "I'm stony broke!"

Josiah started and exclaimed irritably: "And a man who gets drunk on duty deserves to be!"—an amiable allusion to the captain's recent piling-up of a coasting tramp, with the consequent loss of his certificate.

"I suppose it's only by his own brother that a man need expect to be hit when he's down," growled the other. "But I say, Jos, I'm absolutely and completely broke."

"So am I!"

"You! Why, the *Financial Blackmailer* calls you a 'Napoleon of Finance!' I read it myself just now in the clerk's office."

"Napoleon be hanged!" was the testy reply. "Here, read that!" and Josiah pushed the newspaper across to his brother, pointing to the telegram from Barbadoes.

The captain read and re-read the paragraph, then laying it down: "Well, it reads all straightforward enough. What's the matter with it?"

"Matter enough!" retorted the drug merchant. "Why, this infernal *Jane and Elizabeth* will spoil the game I've been playing for the last three months. The price has dropped a few points already, and the moment she's sighted off the Lizard there'll be a slump in the market. Matter, indeed!" and he snorted contemptuously.

The derelict emitted a long, low whistle.

"Yes!" roared his brother, "you'll whistle for your grub soon, when I'm going through the Court."

The sailor rose and walked slowly up and down the small office. Then having opened the baize door and looked out, he shut it carefully and drew his chair close to the explosive Josiah.

"Jos," impressively, "that ship's got to be stopped!"

"Yes, yes! What's the use of saying that? Who's to do it?"

"Name the figure, and I'm the man."

"You, Sam?"

"Yes, your 'drunk-on-duty' brother." And as Josiah gasped with the effort to realise the situation, Sam continued: "Look here, I know these four-masters—two hundred knots the most you'll get out of them. From Barbadoes it's three-and-a-half thousand miles, more or less—that's a good twenty days' sail. When does it say she left? Ah! the first; so she can't pass the Lizard before the twentieth, and it's now the eighteenth. Well, how much shall we say?"

"Five hundred pounds?"

Sam laughed derisively.

"Say a thousand, then," suggested Josiah with a somewhat injured air.

"No! ten thousand, and dirt-cheap, too," was the firm reply; and as Josiah made a gesture of deprecation, Sam led his trump-card: "Do you think I'm going to risk penal servitude for nothing?"

"Penal servitude!" echoed Josiah faintly.

"Yes, Dartmoor bogs or Portland quarries!" And he chuckled, as Josiah visibly shivered. "Of course, if you're afraid, just say so, and there's an end of it; but it seems to me as if things had got pretty near the knuckle for both of us."

It was curious to see how exactly the positions of the two brothers had become reversed within the last few minutes. The "Napoleon of Finance," as the plan was unfolded, had grown palpably limper and flabbier. His brother, on the other hand, no longer diffident with the burden of a favour to be solicited, towered as it were above him. His back stiffened, as with sparkling eye he strode feverishly up and down the little room, the while he poured forth his scheme in a flood of technicalities of which Josiah only half grasped the meaning.

"See, now! This is the river-mouth, with the North Foreland just here;" and with a pencil he rapidly sketched a chart of the Thames estuary on the newspaper. "She'll likely lie-to for her pilot and a tug in the Downs. Then she'll round the Foreland with the flood tide and come up the Edinburgh Channel. Here's the Edinburgh Channel—Edinburgh lightship at one end, Black Deep at the other, between the Shingles and the Long Sand. Proper course, s'far as I remember just now, is head for Black Deep light, leaving the Shingles on the port-hand. There's a beacon on the Shingles during the day, and a gas-buoy at night—gas-buoy flash and dark, what the Trinity House men call 'occulting.' Now, the flood tide on the fifteenth will run strongest about midnight — anyhow, that's near enough. Now, suppose that it should happen (mind, I only say *suppose*) that that gas-buoy had shifted half a mile south of

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its berth, when that four-masted hooker was about? Well, up she'll come on the top of the tide, and rounding the buoy, fetch up hard and fast on the Shingles. If her masts don't go there and then, with the flood tide running strong, and the least little bit of a wind from the north or nor'-east, it'll be as much as they can do to get the crew off before she breaks up, let alone the stuff she's carrying, for all their rockets and lifeboats. Well I know that bank!"

"Was that where you ran ashore before, and—— ?" commenced Josiah innocently.

The other turned on him savagely. His mouth was hard and there was a stiff look about the "torpedo" beard.

"He rapidly sketched a chart of the Thames estuary."

"You let that alone, now! Maybe I *have* been starving, and maybe you *have* chucked me a few odd sovereigns during the last year, and perhaps you've made me know it, too; but it's my turn now. You can't do without me, so you'd best be civil. If I'm to see this thing through, I've got to be boss, and don't you forget it! What's more, you've got to find some of the ready to go on with.

"How much do you want?" This very timidly.

"A fiver for exes, and another to get myself some decent slops, and three more of them for a boat."

Sam fingered the notes with the daintiness of one long a stranger to their crisp rustle, then, cramming them into his breast-pocket, exclaimed—

"As soon as I'm a bit decent, I'm off to Erith to hunt up any ship's lifeboat that's going cheap. I'll send you a wire to meet me at Margate to-morrow or next day; and if I want any more for exes, you've got to stand to it. Now, so long! Show a little pluck, man; and remember," his mouth hardened again, "we've got to sink or swim together—*together*, mind!"

Josiah's mental faculties had lost some of their poise during the march of recent events, but this unwonted phase of his brother's character, the shipmaster's resource, its tyranny, its brutality even, did little to restore their balance.

As Sam stood looking at him with a smile which had something of contempt in it, his hand resting on the door-knob, Josiah rose stiffly and tried to speak.

"Very well," was all he could find to say in return, and as the door closed behind the resuscitated man of action, he unlocked a spirit-stand and helped himself with a trembling hand.

Meanwhile the sailor passed through the outer office, his jaunty air in such marked contrast to the diffident and almost timid order of his arrival as to cause much wonderment among the clerks. As he clattered down the stairs into Mincing Lane, a reminiscence of an old sea-air mingled with the noise of the traffic as it floated up through the half-opened window:—

"As I was going up Paradise Street;
With a heave-ho! Blow the man down!"

II.

THE small crowd of idlers who had stood upon the promenade which fronts the pleasant town of Deal, watching the manœuvres of a small lug-rigged boat as it approached the shore, slowly dispersed when the little

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craft, having dropped her mainsail, grounded on the shingle, and her occupants leaped out and began to scramble up the steep, shelving beach.

The passengers were two in number, both elderly men and both distinguished by the nautical blue cloth caps which are commonly assumed for some unexplained reason by landsmen, even of the most terrestrial type, when they visit the neighbourhood of the sea. One of them carried, suspended from his forefinger, a string of infant whiting, while the other bore under his arm a well-worn naval telescope.

"Well, Jos," remarked he of the telescope, as the pair reached the summit of the beach and turned to gaze out across the Downs, where half-a-dozen coasters rode at anchor, "I'm glad to see that if you are a bit of a funker, you've at least got a sailor's gizzard. If you couldn't stand a bit of a swell, we should be regularly up a tree."

"I don't know what the deuce you mean by a funker," retorted the other sulkily. "Haven't I agreed to do all that you suggest, to risk my life and liberty in this accursed venture, and to pay you a fabulous sum for your part in it? Funker, indeed!" and he scowled malevolently at the dripping trophies of the angle that dangled from his finger.

"That's all right, old cock," responded the first speaker, whom the astute reader has doubtless recognised as our old friend Captain Jenkinson. "Don't you get your back up about nothing, but just you attend to my instructions. Now, you see, when you want to—hallo! what's this rounding the point there?" and the gallant captain, all on the alert in a moment, pointed his telescope at a dark speck enveloped in a cloud of smoke which had just made its appearance round the promontory.

"It's a tug," he remarked after a moment's scrutiny, "and she's got a tow rope astern—and here comes a—yes, by Jingo! it's a four-masted ship—that's her, Jos, that's our friend right enough."

"I suppose," said Josiah doubtfully, "she's not the only four-masted ship in the world, is she?"

"No, I suppose not," growled the captain, "but she's the only one that has passed Dungeness. However, we'll stroll down to the end of the pier, and then we shall be able to see her make her number. Let me see," he meditated, consulting an entry in his pocket-book, "B.T.L.W., I think it is—yes, that's right."

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"Why, she's got a double teak skin, and there's a copper air-case in each of the side lockers. Depended on! I tell you, man, she'll do anything but talk."

"Well, we don't want her to do that," observed Josiah, with a sour grin.

"No, we don't," chuckled Samuel. "By Jingo! what an evening it is! Just look at the sunset, my boy," and here the captain in the exuberance of his joy trolled forth in a sturdy bass voice—

"As I was walking down Paradise Street;
With a heave-ho! Blow the man down!
I met a young frigate so nice and so neat,
With a heave-ho! Blow the man down!

"By the way, Jos, as we have a little time to ourselves, we may as well rehearse the programme. You see, we're heading north-east, but we're actually travelling about north by west on the tide stream; and sailing as we are now, we shall make the buoy in about a couple of hours, by which time it'll be quite dark. Then we'll commence operations."

"Just explain to me again what your plan is," said Josiah.

"Why, you see, the Edinburgh Channel, through which our ship must pass, lies between the Long Sand to the north-east and the Shingle sands to the south-west. At the east end of the channel is the Edinburgh Channel lightship, and about a mile beyond the west end is the Black Deep lightship. The actual end of the channel is marked by the north-east Shingles gas-buoy, and as soon as the ship has fairly passed that she alters her course to the south'ard. Now, don't you see, if we can move that buoy to the south-east, our precious hooker will alter her course a trifle too soon and run slap on to the north edge of the Shingles, just near the North Beacon; and as she will probably run on just about high water flood tide, she won't be likely to get off in a hurry."

"But we can't move the buoy, can we?" protested Josiah.

"Of course we can't, you chuckle-head!" responded the captain impatiently. "Haven't I said so already? But what we can do is to put out her light and rig up a little light of our own in humble imitation, and this is how we've got to set to work. As soon as we get near the buoy, we take down our mainsail, and you work the boat alongside with the oars, and be mighty careful you don't bump her against the buoy and get stove in. Then I jump on to the buoy and hang on to the cage while I feel about for the gas-pipe, and as soon as I have found it

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advancing lights, he was suddenly startled by the appearance of a tall, dark object which seemed to start out of the gloom and creep towards the boat. As it approached and slowly passed close by, he perceived that it was a lofty post or column apparently implanted in the water and surmounted by a great St. Andrew's cross. The astonishment with which he had viewed the apparition now gave place to a very different feeling. This strange, uncanny object was evidently the North Beacon of which his brother had spoken, and its presence, and the manner in which it had apparently swept by the boat, showed that the latter was drifting, as the captain had predicted it would, just in the direction in which it was wanted to go, and that it was still possible for Josiah to carry out his diabolical scheme.

As soon as he realised this, he commenced to take the necessary steps. The lantern was still burning in a box in the stern sheets, and beside it lay the hat. Having mixed and consumed a stiff jorum of whisky-and-water to steady his quivering nerves, he took up the lantern in one hand and the hat in the other, and suddenly held the former up towards the advancing vessels.

"One — two — three — four—five—six—on!" and the hat was slipped on over the light.

"One—two—off!" and the light was once more uncovered.

"One — two — three — four—five—six—on!" and the light was again occulted, to reappear after another two seconds had been counted.

In this way half an hour was consumed, Josiah's aching arm becoming more and more automatic in its action, while his senses became gradually dulled by a kind of auto-hypnotism.

By this time the starboard lights of the two vessels had vanished as the broadsides were presented to the boat, and Josiah had been obliged to creep round from the starboard side to the port bow to follow them as they passed westward. But they were very near now.

As the tug rolled, the light from her cabin skylights could be seen at intervals, and the churning of her paddles was distinctly audible to the wrecker in his boat, while from the ship there came down the wind the sound of a rollicking chorus mingled with the drone of an accordion. Evidently a forecastle concert was in progress.

Suddenly there was a report like the crack of a rifle, followed immediately by a rumbling crash. The chorus and the sound of the

accordion c
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Josiah crou
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lights, whic
the ship, w
and satisfac
to and run
sently he sa
creeping a
lightship.
dark sky w
rocket soare
While the
yet in his
aloft, the an
head swimm
and he sank
the boat.

"Ahoy, boat?"

Josiah sat
pulled hims
that his eyes
A few ya
smack was h
the boat. T
cold; a leade
with a faint
in the south,
not inspiritin
"Is it far t
"Good ten
answer.
"How long
"How lon
faint grin, "
You'll drift o
Now look h
Margate Harb
leave it."
"Very well,
The man c
boat-hook and
"Will yer
come aboard u
Josiah stoo
the smack.
cheerful little
wandered awa
head and sho
tiny companic
liberately, whi
large blue mu
steamed.
"I'll come a

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wreck. It is conjectured that the gas-buoy, which was anchored in the fair-way to the north-east of the Shingles, had in some way become shifted, so leading the barque on to the sands. It is understood that the Trinity House authorities have been communicated with.

"The tug, in returning to the scene of the wreck, picked up a man swimming near the Shingles in a very exhausted condition. He was at first supposed to be one of the crew of the *White Cloud*, who had probably fallen overboard when she grounded with so much force. But on being conveyed to the Margate depôt of the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society, he was not recognised by any of the rescued men. His underclothing was marked 'S. Jenkinson,' and from other indications he is believed to follow the sea. In spite of every care and attention, his condition, as a result of the cold and exposure he had evidently endured, remained too critical to allow him to afford any explanation of his prese therefore, re

*

Lazily Sa there could tween the employer's l dropped the penetrated t knocked, but he tried the l added weigh door shiver, thrust it gav white faces a Then as the office, Josiah brate mass, a dropping fro hole between little stream, the pink shee Josiah had

TWO ROSES.

THIS is the rose she wore upon he
And this the one that nestled in
Were ever flowers of earth so richly
As these two roses were?

The perfume of her hair, her bosom'
Still, still in this rose and in that
The roses of all other Junes must di
She made these immortelles!

M. HEDDERWICI

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I mean paint pictures, of course. You shouldn't twist people's meanings. It's a very bad habit. Will you please pass me my book?"

I deliberately moved the inconvenient volume still further out of the way with my foot. Such a request at such a moment was simply impertinent, and I ignored it.

"Will you give me my book, please?"

"No. Couldn't you go on painting when you were Mrs. Me?"

"Of course not. I should get lazy."

"Well?"

"Well, if
omen? Tell
we are going
will each pai
year, and wh
or her (it is
matter. Do y

"Who is to

"We will b
private opinio

ENCOURAGING.

SNAPSHOT MANIAC TO RACER: Could you—aw—kindly tell me before you
is the best part of the track to get a snapshot of a howling cropp

"We could work together. I also am an artist of peculiar merit."

"You?"

"Decidedly. You didn't see the comments of the Press on my last year's Academy picture, then?"

"No. Did you?"

"No. That, however, was simply because there was no such picture. Painting, however, is a game which two can play at. Do you know what my initials are? R. A."

back to a rat
sunsets."

"I see. And

"She is suppo
to whom she i
present not in
canvas an angel
will readily reco
with a few no
expression of i
shines on the fac

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seemed empty. Then I noticed a limp form on the sofa. It was Marjorie, and she was crying. I can stand a good many things, but one of the things which I cannot stand is to see Marjorie cry. She started up as I came in, and endeavoured to mend matters with a wholly inadequate pocket-handkerchief.

"I did knock," I said. "Marjorie, do tell me what's the matter. Has the picture been rejected?"

"Yes." A sob from the sofa.

"Never mind. We're both in the same——"

"I see now how silly I was ever to think I could paint."

I caught my own eye in the mirror and winked affectionately at it.

"Marjorie," I said, placing a hand in hers—always a sound move—"we will forget that idiotic wager. Treat me as if I had never asked you before, and tell me that you'll—will you?" At this point it seemed judicious to remove my hand from hers and slide it round her waist. I did so. She made no protest.

"Marjorie, say 'Yes.'"

"Yes." In a whisper from the sofa.

After that
and I did th
than otherw
"Marjori
you know w
you to take
"But you
"No. It
failed to imp
"What!
"My pict
Don't move."
She did n
Another l
"We'll ta
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Marjorie s
"Do you
very, very m
think very l
it's so—so—
"Yes, isn't
always thoug
She did no

THE UNANSWERABLE RETORT.

FURIOUS FARE: Don't give me any of your impudence! talking to a magistrate?

UNBELIEVING JEHU: Ho yus! But perraps you didn was torkin' to the Harchbishup er Canterbury!

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SPRING.

FROM A PAINTING BY P

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title is interesting, inasmuch as he (or his ancestors) has achieved something above the ruck of his fellow-countrymen.

The oldest foreign title held by an English peer is held by Baron Arundell. The first great member of the house, Sir Thomas Arundell, was created a Count of the Holy Roman Empire in 1595 for having rendered important services to the German army against Hungary, and ten years later England herself recognised his worth by making him Baron Arundell. The Arundells have retained more than that foreign countship, for they are still Roman Catholics. The title of Count was to be inherited by the male and female members of the family alike, so that when the daughter of the eighth baron

marrie
the la

Photo by] [*Ell*

THE PRESENT DUKE OF MARL

heraul
ton.
Hamil

THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM, WHICH WON THE TITLE OF
DUKE OF MARLBOROUG

The surrender of Marshal Tallard on the banks of the Danube, after th

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MRS. JODRELL, WHO IS THE "COUNTESS NAPIER ST. VINCENT" IN THE PORTUGUESE PEERAGE.

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William
Roman
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earl, who
in 1817-
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Much
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in 1863.

But for

grandfather—if the peerage of Brazil still holds good. He shares his remarkable inventive genius. The Admiral, you remember, devised a "secret war plan," by which he declared he could obliterate Sebastopol or Cronstadt in four hours. The "secret" has twice been examined by competent committees, who have found it infallible but inhuman; and it remains a secret to this day. The present earl has devised a galloping gun for cavalry.

The Austrian Barony of Fremantle, now held by Lord Cottesloe, also carries us back to the roaring days of Nelson and the north. Lord Cottesloe's grandfather, Sir Thomas Fremantle, fought with Nelson at Trafalgar. He was afterwards placed in charge of the Mediterranean fleet and subdued the towns in the Adriatic. The Emperor of Austria made him a baron in 1816 in recognition of this achievement.

Three peers owe their foreign titles to Holland. To begin with, Earl Cowper is (hereditarily) Prince Cowper of the Holy Roman Empire in virtue of the fact that his ancestor, the second earl, married the daughter of Lord Grantham, Henry Nassau

ADMIRAL SIR CHARL
MADE "CO

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Lord Reay, the present peer might have been a
subject to this day, just as the Viscounts Taaffe a
Earls of Newburgh are foreigners in all but title.
Taaffes, who are Irish, were raised to a viscoun
1628. The grandson of the first viscount went o
Austria, where he died in 1704, and there his desce
have remained to this day, holding the highest po
of State. Thus the present viscount's father was
dent of the Austrian Ministry 1879-93, a life mem
the Austrian House of Lords, and Chamberlain and
Councillor to the Emperor Francis Joseph. The T
have no seat in this country. As they hold only a
peerage, they do not vote in our House of Lords, t
the present peer has recently made a move to be
nised as a British subject. Similarly, the Ea
Newburgh are now wholly Italian, their family
being Giustiniani-Bandini and their residence in
The Countess of Newburgh, who died in 1751,
daughter Anne, who married Count Mahony, a F
Irishman. Their daughter Cecilia married
Giustiniani. The
gorgeous name of
Jacobus Gaspar B
He became Earl
Nicoletta Giusepp
Gaspara Baldasa
daughter of the I

LORD COCHRANE, CREATED "MARQUIS OF MARANHAM" IN BRAZIL.

Half Dutch
descendant of th
cated at Eton a
Diplomatic Servic
in his favour, w
Guards, and resid
granted Royal p
Count in this cou
Two distinguis
them foreign ti
Austrian barony
he was raised t
British peerage.
Wandsworth
viscount of Portugal, while the brother of the late
Pirbright is George de Worms, esquire in Englan
baron in Austria.

Several commoners of to-day have received G
titles. Thus Mr. W. E. Bush, the chemist, was c
a baron in the Duchy of Saxe-Coburg, which made
Kempt Campbell, formerly equerry to the late
Baron Campbell von Laurentz, while Ronald Cam
whose father was equerry to the Duke of Saxe-C
is Baron Craignish. Mr. Hugh Halkett is Baron H
in the kingdom of Hanover, in virtue of the fact
his grandfather and namesake, who was a general i
Hanoverian army, was raised to that honour.
Clarendon is Baron Villiers in Prussia, where the firs
was our Ambassador, and he got permission to mak
Prussian Eagle the supporter of his arms.

One of the most curious peerages, and the only R
one, held by a British commoner is the Barony of Dim

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grandfather having been for sixty-two years Consul-General in London for Sardinia and Italy. Master Horace George Butler (born 1898), of Ewart Park, Wooler, Northumberland, is the Count St. Paul in the Holy Roman Empire; his great-great-grandfather, Horace St. Paul, joined the Austrian army as a volunteer, and as colonel on the staff fought in the Seven Years' War against

BARON THOMAS DIMS
F.R.S., 1712-1
A celebrated inoculator f
pox, whose descendant,
Robert Dimsdale, is to-d
Dimsdale in Ru

ALLUREM

FROM yonder hedge, f
He calls me onward
Broad lies the world an
The cuckoo calls—is cal

I have not seen nor hea
Who used my very bed
Since that first morn, w
The cuckoo, calling, cal

My sweetheart's face? I
My mother? But she ca
From that sweet bank, fr
The cuckoo calls—is cal

And I must go—I may n
No gain there is, nor au
And soon—nay, now—on
The bird sits long and w

MARC

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thin and dry—a skeleton with a parchment stretched over it—that I do not believe any respectable and enterprising microbe with a sound appetite would have landed on such a creature. He belonged to that class of lean old men who seem to be indefinitely preserved by a drying process, so that there is no reason that they should die any more than a mummy. His practical business in life was operating in lard, and his name on the produce market was a synonym for shrewdness, capacity, courage, and hardness. By the cunning and daring of his speculations he had upset markets, ruined rivals, and made great strokes of success. Every man has a lighter side, and Jeremiah allowed himself one recreation, and that was the restoration of the lost Ten Tribes. He had received, so he would explain when not occupied with lard, special revelations that the Ten Tribes were the Afghans, and he used to confirm this remarkable idea by photographs showing the likeness between the rulers of Afghanistan and distinguished Hebrews, and also by a collection of texts from the Old Testament in which he traced distinct prophetical allusions to the customs and habits of the Afghan people. It may seem incredible that the same man who kept the lard market in a state of perpetual commotion was the president of the Afghan Restoration Society, but really every person is mad on some points. You may play upon the instrument for a long time before you touch the false note, but sooner or later it will catch your ear. One of the richest men I know, and one of the most benevolent, thinks he has a glass leg; a very successful barrister believes that he has reached a state of spiritual perfection by the special assistance of Heaven; a clergyman I often meet is convinced that any disorder among his books or papers is brought about by the active interposition of Satan; and a respectable tradesman who has amassed a competency by remnant sales will tell you the date of the end of the world, and show you the picture of the general who is to command at the battle of Armageddon. If you ask why gentlemen with such remarkable views are not locked up, I will only reply that most of them are clever enough to lock you up, and that, indeed, if you presume upon their weakness, you are very likely to be undeceived. Anyone who judged Jeremiah's mental capacity by his views on the Afghan question would have made a mistake, and one or two lard men who subscribed to the Restoration Society,

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was very short. Very likely he wished to make some change in his will. I did not know whether in that state he could legally do so; but at any rate, if that was what he desired, we ought to do what we could. Again I asked him whether he wanted a lawyer sent for; but that was not his desire. Whether he wished a paper brought? Yes, that was it. Having procured his keys, I opened his American desk and began to bring bundle after bundle into the room and lay them on the bed; and his eyes looked at me in despair. Not these? No. Not there? No. Where? Then he seemed to make an effort to break the silence and tell us what he wanted and where it was, and—the cord of life snapped. He was gone, carrying his secret with him.

"When the time came to settle Jeremiah's affairs, his lawyers produced a will which he had made two years before, and at the time when his nephew finally decided to remain in the Army. By the provisions of this will Stokes received a thousand pounds, certain hospitals received five hundred each, generous provision was made for his clerks and servants, and the remainder of his estate was left to the benefit of the Society for the Restoration of the Lost Ten Tribes—that is to say, the Afghans—to their native country; and there was a special condition that in no circumstances was any portion of this money to go for the benefit of 'those persons calling themselves Anglo-Israelites, and pretending that the English nation is the lost Ten Tribes, which is a delusion.' The will was drawn up with great care, and, notwithstanding the Afghan craze, there seemed no chance of its being broken. Arrangements were made to realise the estate, and the Afghan Society at once began to look out for a staff of officials, so that if it were impossible to induce any of that turbulent people to settle in the Holy Land, the money might be profitably used in supporting secretaries, which, after all, is one of the main objects of philanthropic societies. No one was surprised at the conditions of the will; but everyone was angry that so much good money should be wasted, and a fine young soldier be deprived of his heritage. I felt so keenly about the matter myself that I told Kinnish, who was the trustee, and who despised the job openly, about Jeremiah's last hour. Both of us searched through his drawers, and in every corner of the house, to find a more recent will. We both came to the conclusion that if he had changed his mind, he would not

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one that would affect my imagination more than what I saw. Consider! An empty house, blinds hanging low on the windows; then, as you are looking, a hand appears upon the blind—only a hand, white, distinct, active. The rest is left to your imagination. Whose hand is it? What is he, or it, doing there? What is going on behind? No doubt a simple explanation lay to hand: a caretaker had been placed in the house, and for some reason wished to pull up the blind. But the hand was not that of a working woman; it was a man's hand, thin, bony, strong, and, above all, white, very white. Or, it might be, a burglar had forced an entrance to the house from behind, and was ransacking it to find whether Wisset had hidden something away. But burglars don't waste their time on empty houses, as a rule; and if they do, they would not advertise their presence by pulling up a front window-blind, even at eleven p.m. For a moment I thought of climbing over the gate and trying whether I could not get access into the house. I looked up at the window again. The hand was gone, the blind was motionless; and then the disappearance affected my imagination more even than the appearance. My courage weakened and I hastened home. As I left the Drive, I looked back and saw from an angle Wisset's house, with the light of the lamp on that middle floor, and I would have given much to know what was the secret within.

"The following evening I visited my patient as usual, but having to go to another case afterwards, I did not come down the Drive. The second evening I was determined to have another look from the outside at Wisset's house, and arranged to pass there about 10.45. It was full moon, with an almost cloudless sky, and the lamps were hardly needed. The Drive was quite still, and as I came down the road, lights were being put out, for the men had to go early to business, and unless there were some social function, they went early to bed. When I came to Wisset's gate, the house was standing out clear in the moonlight, and there was neither sign of life nor motion. For a minute or two I watched, and then began to question whether two nights ago I had not been dreaming dreams. I looked round the quiet and prosaic surroundings of trim villas, neatly kept gardens, and comfortable middle-class life. In the house opposite, the last light went out; it was now eleven o'clock, and I turned from the gate on which I had been leaning, to go home,

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Christmas literature, I had read of thieves taking possession of an empty house, and then getting up ghost scenes to frighten away intending tenants, and it occurred to me that it was within the bounds of possibility that this had been done in Wisset's house. If so, the gang would be living in the cellars, which were reached by a steep, almost ladder, stair. I brought a serviceable stick with me, but I almost wished that I had added an operating-knife as I went into the semi-darkness of the cellars. There were three—coal-cellar, washing-house, and a box-room, together with the wine-cellar—but they were all empty. There was no sign of any squatters. I came upstairs and locked the door of the cellar stairs, and went through the rooms on the ground floor, including the kitchen, and made no discovery. Next I made a survey of the second or highest floor, and found nothing there to remark, and I came to what I may call Wisset's own ground on the first floor. I looked into two rooms which had no association with him, and then I entered the room where he had died. Standing there, I had what I may describe as a vivid sense of the man who was in my thoughts. I do not mean that I saw or felt or heard anything, but only that I seemed to be in his environment. I was uncomfortable, and left the room, passing through the little dressing-room into his sitting-room. As I went over to the window, that window at which the things had happened, perhaps it was inevitable, and did not mean anything, that my sense of Wisset deepened. When I laid hold of the window-cord, as usual the blind wouldn't move; and when I seized it by the lath and shook it in order to make it start, my hand trembled—which was perhaps excusable—and I could not help looking over my shoulder. The blind went up at last, and I looked round the room where I was convinced the secret, if there were any secret, must be found. The sense of something was strong upon me, and I was tempted at one moment to clear out; but it was too absurd to be afraid, in the first-floor sitting-room of a middle-class house at nine o'clock on an April morning. If it had been 10.45 at night inside that room, it would have been another matter. I began to argue the case out along this line—that Wisset was devoted, although he would not acknowledge it, to his nephew; that in a fit of disappointment he had left his money past his nephew to those dirty Afghans; that he had repented it and, as I guessed, had corrected that will;

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AN OLD RHYME REMODELLED BY HAR

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She laughed good-humouredly.

"Oh! I know what you're thinking," she exclaimed; "but it isn't in the face alone one carries the marks of deterioration."

"I suppose not," he answered thoughtfully. "Yet the face is a wonderful index."

She turned and surveyed him coolly.

"You would trust your own impressions of a face, then? It would be sufficient for you?"

"I think so," he answered. "Corroborative evidence would, of course, be reassuring."

"But suppose the evidences—all appearances were against your impressions, which should you rely upon?" she persisted.

"I dare say I should find it hard to make up my mind," he admitted.

She nodded and brushed back the hair from her forehead.

"That is exactly how I feel," she said, turning and walking back to her chair.

* * * * *

At dinner-time she was in unusual spirits. She increased at every moment the circle of her admirers. She sat at the captain's table, and everyone seemed to catch a little of the reflected glory of her bright sayings and infectious laughter. But someone asked her a question, about half way through the meal, which for a moment checked her flow of spirits.

"Who was the man who turned us all out this afternoon, Miss Bateman? We can't put up with that sort of thing all the way over, you know. No one man has a right to two whole uninterrupted hours alone with you—not even the President of the United States!"

"His name is Geoffrey Paish," she answered. "I really don't know much more about him than that."

The name awakened plenty of interest.

"Why, he's the fellow," someone eagerly exclaimed, "who's come in for the whole of the Paish estate. The old man was a banker in New York, you know—his uncle, I think it was. Mighty queer family, too."

"The old man died worth seven millions," the boy who sat on her left hand remarked enviously. "Nice little pile for him to step into."

"Did anyone ever hear of this Geoffrey Paish at college or anywhere?" asked Andrew Bliss, the man who sat opposite to her.

No one had. A man from little higher up the table leaned forward.

"There were some very queer stories going

about New Y
only last wee
The girl c
"There ar
she said, "if
Let us talk a

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She was a
she came up
she wore no
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she was obli
skirts of he
young men
she waved
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been brough
"Will yo
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the fresh br
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"We
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"I looked upon the revolver as a sort of harmless but necessary toy. At that moment I had no fear. But afterwards——"

She shivered.

"Let me fetch you a cloak," he begged. "The breeze is too strong here."

"I am not cold," she answered calmly. "It was a memory. But to go on with my story. Naturally I asked the man what he was doing in my room, and as naturally he pointed to what were left of my jewels. For a burglar he was a terrible bungler. The hand which held his revolver shook so that I could have knocked it out of his hand."

"Look here," he said, "I've got to have some of these. It's life or death to me. I'm very sorry."

"I told him that he was welcome to all of them, that I was quite tired of them, and dying to get some new ones. I warned him of the bloodhounds, and told him of the nearest way on to the State Road. And all the time he stood looking at me in a queer sort of way. I was absolutely certain that the man would never harm me. Perhaps I took advantage of my conviction. I began to laugh at him for his clumsiness. The man got mad. The first part of the whole thing ended very much as I had imagined it would. He threw down my jewels and made for the window. He was clumsy with the fastening, and I got up and helped him. It was then that his mask slipped. It was then also, for the first time, that the burglar misbehaved himself."

Again that queer little smile. The man looked up from the tumbling mass of cloven waters into the face of his companion.

"What did he do?" he asked.

"I shall not tell you," she answered severely. "Only, I think that I would rather have lost my jewels."

"You are not sure about it?" he demanded eagerly.

"It is not a matter which concerns you, is it?" she asked innocently.

He did not reply, and when she spoke again, her tone was graver.

"The comedy ended there, the tragedy began a few seconds later. The man was met upon the lawn by a confederate. There was a quarrel between them, presumably because the burglar declared that he had no jewels to share. I heard the second man declare that he would give his companion up to the police and earn the reward offered for his apprehension. My burglar only shrugged his shoulders. I shouted to them softly to go away. They did not hear.

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cell, perhaps worse. A sudden shriek of the foghorn broke in upon her thoughts. They had steamed right into the midst of a dense bank of white sea mist. Under cover of the grey floating shadows she stole away to her state-room and locked the door.

* * * * *

Almost before the decks were dry the next morning she was out, and, curiously enough, she found him the only other early riser. A fresh, strong wind was blowing salt and vigorous, and the white spray was leaping high into the dazzling sunshine. She held on to the rail, and he came at once to her side.

"You see, I am not yet in irons," he said, with an attempt at gaiety which went ill with his beringed eyes and white cheeks. "What have I to thank for this respite?"

She looked him in the face, and the breath seemed to die away in his body.

"I think," she said quietly, "that you know very well—that—that——"

The wonder of it kept him speechless, motionless. There was something in her face which he had never seen in any other woman's. He felt like a man mocked by a mirage of impossible joys. It was surely a miracle, this. He could not find any words, but for a moment their hands were clasped together.

"I wanted to speak to you," she said hurriedly. "There are one or two things which I must ask you."

"You shall ask me whatever you will, and I will answer you truly," he assured her.

"Are you really Geoffrey Paish?"

"Yes."

"You are very rich, then?"

"Very."

"Why did you break into my room?"

"I had just escaped from prison. I needed money to get away."

"And you were in prison for——?"

"For nothing I ever did. Please believe that. It is my only excuse for many things."

"I want to believe it," she answered simply. "I certainly shall, if you tell me so. Tell me what your plans are now?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"My fortune," he said, "was a tardy recompense for the act of injustice which sent me to prison. I knew that I risked a great deal in coming forward to claim it, but I had had enough of poverty. I was never known in my younger days by the name of Paish, and I have had a fever lately, which has altered me. I decided to risk it. I

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"Delighted to hear it," Hoyle answered heartily. "You mustn't let him get downhearted. Most of the men in the world would enjoy a little affair like this" (he tapped the cablegrams). "I guess it won't do him any harm in the long run. You'll excuse me now, Miss Bateman."

He was busy with another cable. She made her way on deck again. Only once during the rest of the way to Liverpool did she address the detective again.

"I want you to tell me," she said, stopping suddenly in front of his chair, "is—will—have you sent word to Liverpool?"

"Well," he answered slowly, "I guess so. I hated to do it, Miss Bateman, with you both so set against it; but there wasn't any use in bottling it up. I shouldn't be surprised if something didn't happen to Mr. Paish at Liverpool."

"At the docks?" she asked.

"At the docks," he answered.

* * * * *

Early the next morning came their farewell. She drew him behind one of the boats and pressed her lips passionately to his. She dared not trust herself to words. Then he went overboard into the grey mists and was lost to sight in a moment.

* * * * *

Twelve hours later he was shown into a sitting-room at the small private hotel which they had selected as their rendezvous. He was properly dressed, but he had the appearance of a man who has grown suddenly younger. His smile, as she rushed into his arms, was a trifle apologetic.

"You have seen the papers?" she cried.

He nodded.

"I must have have been the densest of idiots!" he exclaimed. "I couldn't see what Hoyle was driving at all the time; and I suppose my head was full of the other thing."

"And all the time," she cried, half laughing, half sobbing, "you were a hero, and I didn't know it. You were the man who saved the President's life at Metrofuzo, and for whose discovery he offered a thousand dollars reward."

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close their doors, and when libraries are given over to dust and silence.

Amongst the largest and most interesting libraries on "the other side" is that at Boston, Mass., with its ten branches having independent collections of books, and its seventeen delivery stations. It was originally founded by Joshua Bates, a native of Massachusetts who migrated to London and became the head of Baring's Bank. In his prosperity he did not forget his native place, and sent over fifty thousand dollars, besides books to the same amount, for the benefit of

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MURAL DECORATIONS BY DE CHAVANNES

Boston city. Of course, the present magnificent building is very different from that first erected. It was opened in 1895, and includes a notable and novel department devoted to reports from American consuls and vice-consuls throughout the world. These gentlemen are primarily concerned in the advancement of American commerce, so they collect valuable information on all subjects concerned therewith. They enter into the minutest details as to the state of the markets at any given time in the countries where they are stationed, note what goods are required, and what others are

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CHILDREN'S LIBRARY, MEDFORD, SUBURB OF BOSTON

the patter of small feet coming and going, the restlessness and whispering of the less disciplined youngsters, and the childish disputes which may arise where a number

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THE CHILDREN'S ROOM, MEDFO

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CHILDREN'S ROOM, SCORVILLE INSTITUTE LIBRARY, OAK PAR
FIREPLACE DECORATED FOR "THANKSGIVING."

A reader's ticket is furnished at the request of a parent, guardian, or teacher. "Pupil's cards" are issued to children of ten years of age and upwards who may require to use books of reference, but these are given only at the request of a teacher.

In certain of the children's libraries national festival days are honoured in a special fashion. When, for example, a public holiday, such as Christmas, Easter, or Thanksgiving Day, is drawing near, an account of it is posted on the bulletin-board that forms an important article of furniture in every children's library. A list of books relating to it is made out, and any pictures that refer to it and that are obtainable, or photographs of such pictures, are exhibited. A great deal of history is also taught in this way. When, for example, the anniversary of a celebrated battle comes round, a miscel-

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CHILDREN'S ROOM, BUF

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conveyed to the children is posted on the bulletin-board, the first thing to which each youngster turns on arriving. New rules, lists of new books and magazines, notices of volumes lost or mislaid, and so on, find a place there.

CHILDREN'S ROOM, MILWAUKI

Thanks to the kindness of Miss M. S. R. James, formerly librarian at the People's Palace in London, and now attached to the Library Association in Boston, we are enabled to lay before our readers a unique collection of photographs of children's libraries in various towns in the United States. That in Boston consists of two large and lofty rooms, of which one is used for reading, and the other as a reference library. The former is lighted in the daytime by two long windows, and at night by electricity. The spiral iron staircases behind the entrance door lead to a gallery that runs all round and is furnished with rows of bookshelves. It will be observed that even the highest rows are accessible to the children. On the walls are hung beautiful and instructive solar prints of famous buildings throughout the world—St. Mark's at Venice, Notre Dame, the Palace of the Doges, and others. These form a permanent exhibit, but in other places the photographs and engravings used to adorn the children's room are varied from time to time. Nor do they invariably consist of architectural subjects, as in Boston. They are frequently copies of world-renowned paintings, or are taken from sculptures such as The Laocöon and the Apollo Belvedere. Now and again they are drawings of familiar wild flowers, or native birds, or wild animals. The children are encouraged to ask questions with regard to any of them, and always find the librarians helpful. The friendliest relations are established in a short time between these ladies and gentlemen and the boy and girl readers. Very often when the latter have reached the age limit, and are relegated to the general reading-room, they beg per-

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THE TOILETTE LESSON.

From a Painting by B. Boes.

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THE TRAIL OF T

THE STRANGE EXPERIENCE OF D

By B. FLETCHER ROBINSON and J.

VI.—THE END OF THE

IN my narrative, now drawing to its conclusion, I have endeavoured to avoid emotion or exaggeration. Yet as I glance over its pages, I cannot proclaim myself as satisfied. On such an evening as this, with the summer woodlands beneath the cottage basking in the tender glory of the sun's farewell, with the silence of the day that is ending holding the quiet fields—on such an evening, I say, my story, even to myself, appears impossible, a nightmare born in the land of evil dreams. Yet I have but to turn my eyes to where my dearest wife sits at her work, to know that it is true; for it was in that time of danger that Providence gave to me the most generous of the gifts that can be bestowed upon man.

Two days after Marnac escaped from our pursuit at Southampton, a little council was gathered in the parlour of Dr. Weston's cottage at Cornish Pollever. In his great arm-chair by the fire sat the old scholar, with the lamplight exposing the delicate fragility of a face whereon consumption had set its warning. In odd contrast was my cousin, Sir Henry Graden, who confronted him. Great-statured, stern, keen-eyed, he was of that type that can fearlessly execute, as well as intelligently conceive, a plan. Mary Weston was on a cushion at her father's knee, his hand in hers; and it was more often to that noble girl that my glance wandered than to my cousin, though, indeed, it was he who now set before us the position of affairs.

It was right, he said, that Dr. Weston should know, even as his daughter knew, the danger that hung over us. And so, from its commencement, he told that terrible story: how Marnac, the celebrated Heidelberg professor, had been seized with a partial mania born of heredity, nurtured by overwork, brought suddenly to the light by the violent attacks delivered against a book on which he

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weeks of anxiety for us all, and Heaven knows what devilish work going forward! Whom can we send? That we must first decide."

"There is Mossel?" I suggested, recalling the aid that stubborn German policeman had already rendered us.

"He would come, gladly enough. But I do not think the Heidelberg authorities would sanction his departure on so vague a journey. No! I am afraid Mossel is out of the question."

"What of Reski? I saw him find the body of his son; he would travel to the world's end if it brought a chance to meet the murderer."

"The very man! I thank you, Cousin Robert."

And so it was settled. We were to send a telegram to the Polish innkeeper next morning. If he agreed to our request, money could be forwarded in time for him to meet us in London, where he would take up his duty as escort to Dr. Weston and his daughter.

"Remember, please, that your destination is a secret," said Graden, as we made our adieus. "There must be no leaving of indiscreet addresses, Dr. Watson; no explanatory letters to old friends, Miss Mary."

"My father and I—we understand," she said, looking him gravely in the eyes. And so we passed out into the starlight.

They were pleasant days that followed—days that seemed to me the happiest in my life. Was it the contrast with the events of that terrible pursuit which gave them their perfection? So I argued at the time. Yet each hour I knew more clearly that it was Mary's bright eyes that warmed the winter sunshine, and Mary's presence that gave the beauty to that wild, inhospitable coast. Of mornings we walked together on the cliffs; and as night drew in, blotting out the grey wastes of the Channel seas, we joined Graden and her father in the little parlour, listening to the talk of those two great-hearted, simple men. On the second day, Reski's answer came, accepting the trust we offered. Then for a week there was no news from the outside world to trouble us, and no incident at Polleven to remind us of our danger save one, which, insignificant though it seemed, I do right to set before you.

As I have mentioned, a narrow dell or "goyle," as the West-country folk would have it, ran between the cottage and the sea. It was a ruinous place in the winter-time, sprinkled with trees knotted and bent under

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the carriage window as the train drew out of the station. I watched it fade into the muddy grey of the morning; and as it disappeared, the love I had hidden from myself rushed over me, so that I stood with staring eyes, perhaps as foolish and woe-begone a figure as humanity has ever smiled to witness. And for this I shall always thank my cousin, Harry Graden, that he slipped his arm in mine, leading me down the platform as if he had noticed nothing out of the ordinary in my manner.

"We shall soon have news," he said quietly. "For information that will lead to his arrest, I have offered the police, here and on the Continent, a reward of five thousand pounds."

He spoke the truth. News came soon, indeed.

We were lunching together in Graden's chambers on the fourth day after their departure, when the telegram arrived. My cousin opened it. As he read, I saw the line of his jaw set and harden. Then he handed it across the table. This was the message:—

"*Fear we are in great peril. Come at once.*—WESTON."

The realisation of those words must have come to me slowly, for it was Graden's hand on my arm that woke me from the stupor into which I had fallen. Even then I could hardly understand. "There is a train at two-twenty," said he. "Can you be ready in five minutes?"

"But how can the man—how can Marnac have discovered where they are?" I stammered.

"In five minutes, I said!" he barked out. "You have no time to waste."

We had still a quarter of an hour to spare when our cab rattled over the cobbles of the station-yard. While my cousin took the tickets, I stood at the bookstall, staring at the backs of the novels, with that call for help twisting in a devil's chant through my head. "In great peril. Come at once," so it ran, over and over again. Several passing strangers turned and regarded me curiously over their shoulders.

I do not think we spoke more than once before reaching Dover. I asked if he had telegraphed a reply. He had done so, he said, at Charing Cross.

There was a brisk sea running in the Channel, but I felt no sickness. Indeed, the passage did me good; for I behaved quite sanely as we passed our bags through the Calais customs.

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great post-carriage rushed roaring down the hill.

I thrust out my head, clinging to the sills of the open window.

The man upon the box-seat was lashing the horses so that they sprang forward in furious bounds. Even as I watched, he cast away his whip with a peal of wild laughter that sounded high above the turmoil of the flying hoofs and the heavy wheels. He turned his head, bending sideways, the reins held loosely in his right hand. It was the face of Marnac that stared down upon me.

His hat had gone, his white hair streamed backward in the wind. And he was mad—mad with an open insanity of which I had observed no trace before. He shrieked at me in triumph, waving his hand now to the horses, now to the chasm beyond the four-foot wall that guarded the road. He cursed me with furious gesticulations. Even as I write, I seem to see those eyes staring at me out of the white paper—eyes goggling with the lust of murder. Heaven send that time will wipe that remembrance from my brain!

I shrank back into the carriage, that rocked and swung and danced beneath me. Graden's huge shoulders almost blocked the other window; but I caught sight of the glint of his revolver in the moonlight. Was it to be man or horse? One or the other, if we were not to leap the precipice at the first sharp turn. Suddenly he shouted, and again I struggled to my post. In the darkness down the road was the glimmer of lights. Nearer and nearer they drew, and I, too, raised my voice in a scream of warning. The last fifty yards we took in one bound—or so it seemed. I saw a carriage grow out of the shadow that the cliffs above us drew across the road; I saw our leading horse swing to the left and leap blindly at the low wall that hid Heaven knew what frightful depths below; and then, with a tottering slide that seemed to wrench the heart out of me, we curled, as a motor skids, into one thunderous crash that blotted out the world.

Mrs. Harland's Narrative.

I have been asked by my dear husband to conclude the story of which he has placed the greater part before you. I should have preferred that he had not tried to recall details which I know he cannot remember without suffering; but having once yielded to the persuasion of his friends, I am ready to take every share of the burden that he will yield to me,

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they had moved more quickly, we could not know.

We had passed the last bend that turned upward, leading in a long slope to the entrance of the gorge, when we stopped suddenly. Reski sprang out; clambering after, I found him by the driver, who was pointing with his whip up the road. The man had been warned to give us notice of any approaching vehicle.

"It is a post-carriage," he said. "They have stopped to breathe their team."

The road had been carved and joisted along the cliff side, and where we stood, under the mighty wall of rock, the shadows were gathered darkly. To our left the rugged barrier rose dimly into the night, clear only where its battlements broke the pearl of the sky at some great height above us; to our right, a low stone coping hid the grim uncertainties of the precipice. But fifty yards up the slope the cliffs fell back, and the road stepped out into the silver moonlight, mounting the hill, through a border of stunted trees, in a simple curve, as white and well defined as a chalk mark on a blackboard. On its crest I could see the patch on the snow carpet that marked the waiting carriage. It was, perhaps, the half of a mile away.

The patch of shadow moved slowly forward.

Suddenly, though distance hid the suggestion of the cause, the pace increased. Faster and yet faster it swept down the road; in the white silence of the night the muffled hoof-beats came thumping to our ears. The carriage grew clearer. We could see how it rocked; it might have been some great ball that flew bounding towards us.

For some moments we had stood motionless, helpless, before this amazing apparition. It was Reski who first understood; it was he who seized me by the arm, screaming in his excitement to run—to run down the way we had come. And in my panic I obeyed, flying wildly towards the sharp bend in our rear. I had almost reached it when there came a thought to me that jostled out the remembrance of my own safety, turning me back, with Heaven knows what anxiety in my heart. Robert and Sir Henry—could they be the travellers that came galloping to almost certain death?

The runaways had but one chance—to hug the cliff, thereby giving space to clear the turn without charging the low wall that guarded the unknown depths of the gorge. But to my horror, I saw that this was a

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STRONG

By S. R. CR

SYNOPSIS OF FOREGOING CHAPTERS.—The stor
Match Day had been a holiday since the beginning of tir
occasion denied the request of his scholars. A riot provok
school, Muckle Sandy, who retorted by knocking the schoolm
with the aid of "Strong Mac," one of the bigger boys, p
comes of distinguished stock, but has fallen on evil days
the "Single-handed" cup in the ploughing match, but in
his promise to help Adora Gracie "keep school." The secon
Webster, in love with Strong Mac, lest in her pique at his
poacher into the hands of the Laird's gamekeepers. The
in Mac's bag had been taken from his shoulders by a boyis
wounded by a shot from the keeper's gun, Strong Mac himse
fired Sharon McCulloch, the father of Mac, a dour enemy of
establish afresh a right of way "to kirk and market" throu
developments showed the repulse of the Laird's attention
Mac is probably his more favoured rival. The Laird's
inferior in rank. Jock Fairies and Sandy Ewan are also
Mac by plotting with one Crob McRobb to make it appe
Adora loiter homewards from a party given by Aline Mc
Mac is arrested on a charge of sheep-stealing, Sandy feig
should be accused.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SHERIFF'S ROOM.

IT was in the Sheriff's room at Kirkcudbright, at his first private examination, that Roy first learned the nature of the charges brought against him. The apartment was sparsely furnished. In the centre was a table bearing evidence in carefully graded ink-stains of the scrivening labours of former Sheriffs' clerks and, in more recent circles (taken in connection with a pervading flavour of tobacco), of the jovial habits of the present occupant.

There were also some volumes of law books in faded yellow calf, bundles of letters marked with tags of pink tape, and a pile of novels in a corner, half hidden by a brief-bag and some official Blue-books.

The Sheriff Substitute, Martin Dalmahoy, a jovial red-faced man, sat at the head of the table. During the first part of the examination he pouted his lips, hummed, whistled, and consulted his watch about once in every three minutes, evidently wishing the whole affair at Jericho. The Fiscal, Dicky Henderson by name, was a tall sallow man with a long lean nose bent a little to the side, as if after much endeavour he had at last succeeded in seeing his opponent round it.

It was he who put the questions, with the air of a judge assuming the black cap. The Sheriff confined himself to cautioning Roy

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"I cannot on any account bring my friends into the question. They had nothing to do with my actions, good or bad, and I——"

Here the Sheriff interrupted. He had altogether ceased to look at his watch. Something in the attitude of the young fellow convinced him that on this occasion he had no affair with a mere vulgar sheep-stealer. The man before him was either one of the highest class of criminals, or he was an innocent man falsely accused. The Sheriff proposed to himself to find out which.

"Let me caution you again," he said, "this is a private inquiry. The information we obtain from you may or may not be used in court. If, however, you satisfy me of your innocence, you walk out of this room a free man. But I warn you that by refusing to give up the name of the friends to visit whom you went and came across the Nether Airie moors, you go far to justify a *primâ facie* case against you."

Roy McCulloch shook his head. He foresaw the local papers, with the evidence printed in full, and names that were dearer to him than life bandied from mouth to mouth, staled by all ignoble use. The ale-house and the stable should not make their jests upon those whom he loved.

"I am sorry that I can do no more," he said, "whatever may be the consequences."

"Then you refuse to clear yourself?" said the Fiscal. "You will not answer my question?"

"I will answer anything which has reference directly to the charge brought against me," said Strong Mac.

"But," said the Fiscal, "we, and not you, must be judges of that; and, indeed, that is just what you refuse to do. According to the information before me, thefts of sheep have been going on from the moor of Nether Airie during the last three or four months. The fleeces found in your barn are of various ages, corresponding generally to the times at which the thefts were committed. The ear on which the Mr. Ewan's earmark was impressed has in every case been cut away, obviously for the purpose of preventing identification. If, therefore, you confess to having been in the habit of frequenting the Nether Airie moors at night, and refuse to supply us with the means of verifying your statements and checking your alleged friendly visits, we are shut in to the conclusion that you were upon Nether Airie for purposes other than innocent."

The Fiscal achieved his phrase with a

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in order to hasten into the parlour to talk with Sandy Ewan. At that Adora marvelled greatly, for there was in the newly made laird neither reading nor even the smallest tincture of the love for letters; yet there was no manner of doubt that he was acquiring some curious power over the Dominie. Even when Donald Gracie spoke of his ex-pupil, his hand would tremble and a tremor come into his voice.

For the second time Sandy Ewan underlay the spell of Adora. Her very scorns attracted him, sated as he was with too facile triumphs. She had refused his best offers, when he had thought that he had only to throw the handkerchief. But, he told himself, at that time Strong Mac was in his way. Therefore, Strong Mac must be put out of the way, and for this end blonde Scot and dark aboriginal Piet made a plan and hid it deep.

Sandy Ewan even told himself that Adora's late-born forbearance was the beginning of something more hopeful. It had only wanted the poacher's son laid by the heels. And then the girl's father—Sandy Ewan laughed to himself. He had found a way with the dotard—such an easy way, and everyone knew that Adora Gracie would sell her soul to pleasure the Dominie.

Once again Sandy Ewan deceived himself. He was of the temperament called "sanguine," which, when it turns to do evil, becomes sanguine also as to the rewards of iniquity. He believed that Adora Gracie, separated from Roy McCulloch, would ere long become conscious of the advantages of being the wife of Alexander Ewan, Esquire, of Boreland and Ardinlass, Justice of the Peace on His Majesty's commission for the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright. That, he told himself, was surely promotion high enough for a dominie's daughter. But Sandy Ewan, regarding himself as a most desirable type of the successful man, forgot to take his account with that in the heart of a woman which follows with wistful yearning the ill-used and misfortunate, until, all unawares, she may find her own heart taken in the bands of a man. Not that Strong Mac's misfortunes had had this effect upon Adora; but this at least is certain, that Sandy Ewan's greatness, his blatant desirability were rather against him than otherwise, so far as Adora was concerned.

The girl had not yet found her own heart, and so scarce believed that she possessed one. She was like a person who has never suffered from sea-sickness. The evidence was too strong for complete disbelief in the existence

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"Good-night, Aline!" cried Adora, waving her hand with that quaint upward ripple of her fingers which was natural to her in saying adieu. "I will look over to the back bench for you to-morrow, and it will be a comfort to see you there. You will know that I am thinking of you."

She kept looking back to see the gentle old maid smiling pensively, Madonna-wise, at her from the turn of the road. Then with a certain throb of self-reproach that she had been so long without thinking of Roy in his prison, she remembered that Sidney Latimer would about that time be taking leave of her father. At this she smiled, not without a certain malice at the disappointment which she knew would sadden the brown eyes. She was grieved for Strong Mac. Nothing—save one thing—in all her life had ever given her such pain, but it is too much to ask of nineteen that it should be continuously sorry for long together. That is reserved for the old.

Then without a warning, without a moment to bethink herself, Adora found herself face to face with Sandy Ewan. He saluted her courteously as he stepped out of a thicket by the wayside. There was a brightness about his eyes that lighted up his heavy face. But the underlip protruded more than ever with the obstinacy of a balking horse, and his eyes had a hardness in them which would have put a more suspicious person than Adora Gracie upon her guard.

He held out his hand. Adora gave him hers mechanically. She had not yet recovered from the suddenness of his appearance. He held it longer than he had ever ventured to do before, and Adora, waiting for an explanation of his presence, for a moment forgot to reclaim it. For which omission she afterwards blamed herself. Sandy Ewan turned to walk back with her towards the village.

"I called at the schoolhouse on my way," he began hurriedly, for Adora had drawn away her hand, "but I found that—that insolent hound Latimer there, who would scarcely look at me. So to keep from breaking his neck, and because your father told me where you had gone, I came to see you home."

"I am obliged," said Adora coldly; "but you made two mistakes. I did not need any one to meet me, and Mr. Latimer is not an insolent hound. He is a gentleman, both in deed and in word."

Adora felt the stiffness of this speech, but,

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cannot. I never thought to crave on any woman," he added, "or to offer twice what many would be proud to have one chance of."

"Sandy Ewan," interrupted Adora, "I have already answered you once. What is the use of giving us both all the pain over again? You asked me to marry you. I told you plainly that I never could——"

"But you told me, too, that you did not love any other man."

"You asked the question which always deserves an honest answer from every woman. I told you, as kindly as I was able, that it could never be——"

"But you would not tell me why," urged Sandy Ewan, endeavouring to take the girl's hand. "What is your objection to me? What is the fault? Speak out. I can amend as well as any——"

"It is better not to call names," said Adora quite gently, "else, perhaps, this time I might have to answer you unkindly, which, since you have been so patient with my father, I should be very loth to do."

"Is not that in itself a reason," he persisted, with a sudden access of confidence, "a reason why you should marry me, Dora? I have your father's confidence—perhaps more than that. He wishes what I wish. I cannot, then, be so bad—so unworthy. He needs someone to look after him—someone not a girl. I could give both of you a good home and many comforts. I could ensure your father's happiness and give my life to satisfy your every wish. Will you not think of it, Dora?"

The girl shook her head sadly. For once it appeared to her that Sandy Ewan was sincere. He loved Adora Gracie, and he pleaded his cause according to his nature with what of eloquence was in him. He had these things to give, and what he said was true. Many a woman of far higher rank than a village dominie's daughter would have been glad to share her lot with the young Laird of Boreland.

"I am more than sorry," she said gently, laying her hand on his arm; "but I cannot love you. Perhaps I am not made for love. You spoke of Roy McCulloch, but he is not the obstacle to what you wish. The obstacle is that I would rather work in your fields for a day's wage than marry a man I do not love. And I can never love you, Sandy."

It was well and gently said, but the spirit of it was lost upon the man before her. In an instant the tiger nature flared up within him. He flung off the gentle appeal of her hand with brutal impatience.

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recent controversialists slumbered peaceably together. The same dust covered Calvin and Turretin, Law and Hoadly, Bluidy Mackenzie and the pamphlets of Shields and McWard.

Yet not even at Geneva in the high days was "priest" ever writ more large than in the minister of Lowran's study, and among the assembled Presbyters of the ecclesiastical tribunal of St. Cuthbertstown. Nor was the particular subject of their deliberations to blame for the sounds of war that arose. The Presbytery of St. Cuthbertstown could disagree about anything the date of a pastoral "veesitation," the wording of a phrase in the minutes, the date of a "Thanksgiving Day" for the purpose of calling the attention of the Almighty to the merits of H.R.H. the Prince Regent, and "the recent marvellous successes which had attended our arms both by land and sea." The mere raw material of a battle did not matter. The fight was the thing.

For instance, no quieter man ever droned a sermon than Mr. Gilbert Leng, minister of the metropresbyterial charge of St. Cuthbertstown. His own congregation had slept under him for twenty years with comfort and profit. But in the Presbytery, as soon as the last words of the Moderator's opening prayer were out of his mouth, the hair on the head of the minister of St. Cuthbertstown began to stand erect upon his head. His eyes sparkled as he recalled a grievance, and lo! in a moment he had launched himself at the throats of his brethren.

Sober, kindly, unimaginative, undiligent, easily influenced Dr. Cyrus Meiklewham (who had been made a D.D. long ago by an ancient university because his father, an eminent townsman, kept pestering the Professor of Divinity about the matter, spoiling his driving upon the golf-links) had a difficult team to control that high day in early summer, when chairs were brought from all over the house, even from the confines of the back kitchen, to seat the brethren of the Court. Meanwhile Hope Meiklewham took her afternoon meal as she sat dangling her legs over the edge of the kitchen table, and, somewhat imaginatively, enlightened Bet Conchar, the Manse lass, as to the peculiarities of ministers.

"Save us, Mistress Howp!" cried Bet, with her hands held up in horror, "and do ye really mean to tell me that Maister Kidston o' Da'beattie went sae far as to raise his wife oot o' her warm bed at three in the mornin' to hear him deliver a' ower again his speech at the Assembly?"

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The girl threw a potato-peeling over her head and laughed at Bauldy.

"And what's a Moderator, Miss Howp?" the Manse lass went on, after a pause to hang a broth-pot one link higher over the fire.

"Oh!" said the truthful Hope, "it's just one of themselves that they put in a chair for the rest to rage at!"

"And what for does he let them?"

"Because," replied the ready Hope, "it's his turn, ye see—like Blind Man's Buff or Cross Tig!"

"And wha's Moderator the day?" asked Bet, who was always interested about ministers. It was the first time the Presbytery had visited Lowran in her time.

"It's wee Amos Peerie, from Beeswing," said Hope, "and that's the reason they are raging like young bulls in cleg-time. If it had been Baillie of Hardhills, they would have been as quiet as mice when pussy is at the hole-mouth."

"What!" cried Bet, "yon muckle reid-faced man, wi' the voice that wad cry 'Hurley' to a coo on the tap o' Criffel—him that askit for a glass o' brandy afore he preached at the Niffertoon Communion?"

"The same," said Hope. "It was his wife that pulled all the leaves off her gooseberry-bushes to keep the caterpillars from eating the berries. But after all her trouble, she got none, for they all withered in the sun and fell off."

"Heard ye ever the like o' that?" cried the maid. "It surely doesn't tak' a heap o' sense to be a minister's wife. I ken better nor that mysel', an' dinna set up for bein' ocht oot o' the common, either."

Hope Meiklewham continued her delusive catalogue.

"And there's Colvin of Sprose that preaches in black gloves, and used aye to put them on in the pulpit to show how daintily he could fit on the finger-tips, till one day his son Chairlie half-drowned some wasps in treacle ale, and left them to come to themselves in his father's preaching-gloves——"

"Oh, the misleart vaigabond!" cried Bet Conchar. "I howp his faither warmed him for that."

"And then there's Peter Grewlie of Rerwick, that preaches other folk's sermons for his own——"

"How do they ken that?" demanded Bet, who had a weakness for the Cloth, and did not like to hear it evil spoken of.

"Because the sermons are that dreadful ver, and on Mondays he can't even re-

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of Hardhills was always peculiarly terrible at this stage. His loud voice was so intimidating that their very knees knocked together. And Mary Adamson, Adora's pet pupil, who trampled "Effectual Calling" under her feet and knew all the labyrinthine turnings of the Commandments, even to the "Reasons Annexed," grew so frightened when the inquisitor suddenly demanded of her "What is the chief end of man?" that the well-known words departed from her, and she stood dumb and trembling. But Adora, taking advantage of the teacher's ultimate privilege, put the question over again, adding: "And can you give the Scriptural proofs as well?" Upon which the fountains of Mary's deep were broken up, and even Baillie of Hardhills had no more terrors for her. To the New Testament class succeeded, in descending order, the "Tenpenny"; to the "Tenpenny" the "Sixpenny." The final "Tippenny" was in sight, when Adora, suddenly looking up from her preoccupation, found that her father was not in the school. For a while she did not become uneasy. He had gone out, she thought, overcome by the natural fatigues of the day, to rest himself a little on his bed. She remembered with thankfulness that she had expressly bidden him to do so if he should feel tired.

But three o'clock, the hour of golden speech, was at hand. The seniors came back, braving in unashamed pairs the village street after their "Without Prejudice" walk. Parents and guardians, dropping in belated, crowded more densely the wall spaces allotted to them. Mr. Sidney Latimer himself occupied, as principal heritor of the parish, a place among the brethren of the Presbytery. The reverend court grew visibly more expansive. Dinner was now well within sight. Dr. Meiklewham had been seen to send off a message to his daughter, and everyone knew that at the Manse they were getting ready to serve the broth. Hardhills had it on good authority that there were two chucky hens in it. All was ready. The Presbytery, sharp-set by a long day of question and answer, was ready also.

But still there was no Dominie!

For years too numerous to be recalled exactly, it had been the custom of Lowran School that the Dominie, with bent head and a modest demeanour, should stand up in his official desk and listen to the compliments, more or less sincere, which were heaped upon him for his skill. The Presbyterial Chrysostoms recalled the successes of the boys

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stumbled rather than walked into the hushed silence of Lowran School. The door shut behind him without visible assistance. Thus fell the stroke. Adora felt a tingling chill run all through her body. She thought she was about to faint. All power departed from her. She could only sit still, gazing at her father with vague fascinated eyes. He swayed visibly on his legs, seeming to wonder at the hush. Then he laughed idiotically.

"Time for the Latin lesson!" he cried. "Eh! where's your Virgil, Peter Adair?"

Then he caught sight of the reverend Presbytery, seated in order, twelve in all. He laughed again.

"Latin! Greek!" he cried, passing his finger along the line, "there's not enough of the classics among the lot of you to fill a good-sized nutshell. There sits Baillie of Hardhills—he kens none and never did. He kens about whisky-jars, though. And the Doctor, he learned some once, but he has forgotten it—soft as porridge that head of his—a fozy turnip—a fozy, fozy turnip! None of the crew but Wee Peerie could read a page of Virgil without a dozen 'maxies'—no, not to save their lives!"

By this time he had reached his desk. Adora recovered herself and bounded to his side. Taking him by the sleeve, she urged him to come away out. Sidney Latimer was on the other side. The members of the Presbytery, at first stunned, then deeply insulted, were mostly on their feet. Baillie of Hardhills raised his voice to rebuke the insolence of the Dominie. Kind Dr. Meiklewham had suddenly a grey look on his face. But the voice of the Dominie from the desk rose high above every other sound.

"An ignorant drunken crew!" he cried; "hand and glove with the lairds—not a man among ye except the Doctor—a kind heart the Doctor—good and sound, all but the head! Preach! Ye can prate, but never preach! Ye should hear me preach! Never a sleeping e'e in my kirk. There's a box of sermons up the stair that no man among the lot of ye could ever have laid pen to. And ye will come here condescending to me—me that could teach not only the Presbytery but the Synod! It's 'Mr. Gracie has done well—his method of imparting the classics does him credit. The Greek prose was truly remarkable!' Devil the syllable ye ken about it—except, maybe, Wee Peerie! Get ye out of my school, and never let me see your

(To be cont

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remarkable smartness at the pianoforte, however, having attracted the attention of enterprising managers, he decided to "go on the stage," and engagements duly flowed in.

And now, with the aid of his clever and charming American wife, who is the "Grayson" of the duo, he has become one of the most popular of those public entertainers who are content to be funny without being vulgar.

Mr. Ross's piano-playing extraordinary, whilst not forming the whole of the entertainment in which he and his wife appear nightly, is decidedly a very remarkable item in a clever performance.

The introduction of this trick playing occurred through an amusing incident which happened during a performance of "The Professor and his Pupil," about a year ago. Mr. Ross was sitting at the piano playing Chaminade's "Elevation"—a rather appropriate air, considering the sequel—when the stool collapsed under him, and the player found himself sitting in a rather undignified

DANCING WHILST PLAYING BACKWARDS.

position on the floor! The audience naturally laughed. A bright inspiration came to Mr. Ross. Sticking his heels upwards into the air, he continued to play from his "seat" on the floor the same air, "Elevation," and

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down the cover of the piano, executing a handspring, turning a somersault, and landing on his feet!

He is so thoroughly musical that he actually enlists his nasal organ in the service of the public's amusement, which, being interpreted, means that he plays the treble of any tune with his nose.

Another of the feats performed is that of playing whilst kneeling on the top of the piano, leaning downwards and pressing the keys from the opposite direction from that in ordinary playing. This, Mr. Ross informs me, is perhaps the most difficult of all his feats. Every movement of hands and fingers is altogether reversed, owing to the player's position. The greatest caution must be exercised, and only a player with an unfailing memory could hope to perform the feat without some ludicrous blunder.

Something must be said about the marvellous speed with which the performer manipulates the notes. It has been calculated that in some of the most difficult passages in a piece of music he strikes an average of ten notes a second, or 600 per minute.

Mr. Ross is always prepared to play any popular music selected by anyone in the audience. He does not confine himself to his own *répertoire*.

One of the quaintest of the effects produced is the playing by the right hand of one tune—say, "Dolly Gray"; and "Yankee Doodle" with the left hand; whilst the player sings another song, such as "'Way down the Swanee River." The blending of the three totally different tunes is remarkable, there being no discord throughout.

"Lying down to his work," is a phrase sufficiently descriptive of other feats performed by Mr. Ross. Sitting on the top of the instrument with his back to the audience, he bends downwards until his face and upper portion of his body is visible to those in front. In this extremely uncomfortable position, the player, bringing his wrists outwards, is enabled to strike the notes with surprising effect and delicacy. He can play any air.

Another position that must prove very trying is when the performer plays whilst his heels are on the top of the piano, and his head rests on a footstool on the floor. How he escapes asphyxiation is something one can scarcely understand, as it takes a little time to complete a tune.

The most amazing feat of all those which

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"The fish is out of the water, and you see your ba

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does your bait strike the water again than you feel a sharp rap. On the instant you cannot quite make up your mind whether to strike or not. But the next moment a fish breaks water and goes down immediately over your bait. He has seen it, and it looked so much alive to him that he hit it with his tail, and then simply turned around to pick it up. You are prepared for what is coming, so you brace yourself for the shock.

You feel you have hooked the fish. He goes straight to the bottom, and though you are putting all the pressure you have on your thumb-brake, you cannot stop him. He goes fully seventy-five yards before he shows himself; and when you do get sight of him, you see his back as he shoots out of the water in a tremendous leap, which takes nearly ten yards more of your line. He is going straight away from you, as you sit there pressing every ounce you have in you on the brake, in the hope of stopping him. He is a hundred and fifty yards away before you see him again. You try your best to hold him. The spool on your reel is much reduced by the outgo of line. Every bone and muscle in your arms and hands is aching from the pressure. Your guide in the meantime is backing water towards the fish with all his might. It is no use, however; you cannot do it. He comes out of the water again, as the last of your line goes off the reel with a shriek. At the same time, you feel a violent pull on the rod. As the new strain comes in an entirely different way, the rod is almost out of your hands before you adjust yourself to it. But you do hold it. There is a sharp report like a rifle-shot a short distance away. You look in a dazed way after the fish. You see him jump wildly into the air a couple of times, turning over and over as he falls back into the water, and all is ended.

You feel as though you had had hours of struggle; the muscles in your arms and hands fairly ache; but it has really taken little more than a minute to accomplish all this. It does not profit you to wonder how it came about. It is the kind of thing that happens to the most skilful veterans, and they can explain it no better than can the novice. They will tell you that when the fish, breaking water, is headed away from you, especially when headed towards the open sea, you might as well make up your mind that he will get your line. The fish may be counted as a dead fish, for the friction on the line will cause him to keep up the struggle until his last spark of life goes out.

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worked the boat so that it is just over the spot where the tarpon lies—a very bad place for it to be in. As you cannot move him, you begin to think that the fish is off and that your line has caught on something on the bottom. You finally conclude this is a fact. So you slack up to move the boat in another direction with a view to unhooking. This slacking of the line causes the fish to move. You put the strain on again at once, and he seems to give a little. Your tired muscles and aching fingers take on a new lease of life, and you go at him. You give him another lift. He comes up a little more. You are surely bringing him to the surface. You are putting in all the power you have. To encourage you and to be prepared for the unexpected—though he does not believe the battle to be half over—the guide makes ready with the gaff. After many pulls and much lifting, till your muscles are numb from the strain, you bring the big fish to the surface. The guide cautiously reaches out with the gaff. You are feeling highly elated, as you swing him slowly within reach, and are all ready to relax with a sigh of relief, when, in a flash, the fish, which has no intention of giving up, is away. In an unguarded moment you are the recipient of a crack on the fingers from the reel-handle that makes you dizzy, and before you recover sufficiently even to think of putting pressure on the brake, the fish has not only gained a hundred yards of line, but has had a breathing spell. Well, you pull yourself together, grit your teeth, and go at him again.

Your guide is now backing towards the fish as rapidly as possible, to get in what line may be had that way before the fish moves again. Working the reel under this reduced pressure limbers you up a bit, and you begin to take notice again. But a hard fight is still before you. The tarpon recovers rapidly and is now as fresh as ever. You reel in until you get a fairly good strain on him, doing it as gently as you possibly can, so as not to alarm him; and then you think

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"Don't read aloud, man," said the first speaker nervously. "How do you know that someone isn't listening?"

"'Ow do I know?" replied the working man; "why, 'cos I can see no one ain't listening."

I proceeded to take a fervid interest in the mermaid, and kept myself hidden, as far as I could, behind the pedestal which supported it. The overhearing of a nefarious design gives one a most unpleasant feeling of participating in it, and it was with a feeling of great relief that I heard their departing footsteps on the other side. One walked quickly away, and I did not see him; the other strolled to the side of the room. It was the working man.

I sauntered with an unconscious air away from my mermaid and looked at the man carefully, for I wanted to recognise him if I saw him again. Without attracting his suspicion, I noted his height and gait, the short beard and shaven upper lip, and other characteristics of the man, and then I strolled through the rooms wondering what to do.

One thing was perfectly clear. A plot was on foot to steal the most important picture of the year. Instinctively I walked towards the subject of my thoughts and joined the group admiring it.

It was a wonderful portrait of one of Fashion's votaries. The look of craving for admiration and weariness of it was marvellously caught. The very artificiality born of struggles in a "smart" set was suggested with infinite skill. The richness of the sumptuous dress and the glitter of the jewels were represented with that fearlessness and knowledge which we are too apt to look upon as non-existent in modern art.

In my first walk through the large room I had not studied the picture with great care, but now, with my awakened interest, it was a revelation to me. The whole canvas was the embodiment of skill, but perhaps the most striking feature of all was the daring deftness with which the left hand, over which a diamond and emerald bracelet fell, was painted. A critic's finger was pointing it out, and I looked and wondered with him.

The painter was a man who had been a social as well as an artistic success, and he lived among the people whose portraits he painted. A year ago the work of Francis Newlyn would have been described as clever, though not always convincing, and he would have ranked among a score of others. This one picture had lifted him out of their company. Here he had succeeded

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been decoyed, the want of object in the theft, the artist's odd manner, all baffled my curiosity. Perhaps the man's want of common gratitude, so strange in such a polished gentleman, did more than anything else to stir me to action. I reflected that the next day I was an idle man, and I determined to see the matter through.

There is nothing like detective-fever for making one arise betimes, and an early hour saw me at Burlington House. It was well that it was so, for I had barely taken my stand by the gates when a van came rolling up, and there beside the driver I recognised the bearded and honest enough looking face of my conspirator, the working man. The reflections which occurred to me, on seeing his face quite unperturbed at the thought of committing a serious crime, I will here omit. Suffice it to say he betrayed no outward discomposure, for which I was half inclined to envy him, for I was getting in a state of considerable excitement.

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Although I knew that he could not recognise me, I felt it more fitting to the occasion to conceal myself behind a pillar while he descended and went in to search for the picture. It is difficult, they tell me, to get anything into the Academy. It seems equally hard to get anything out. For a long while I waited impatiently, till a feeling of something like disappointment came over me as it occurred to me that the plot might have been discovered and my man arrested before I had solved the mystery.

At last, however, my patience—or, rather, my impatience—was rewarded, and a picture swathed in sacking was brought out and hoisted into the van. The man resumed his seat, and the van rolled out of the yard. Lest I might lose it in the traffic, I noted the name of the firm it belonged to: "Bilton and Company," the well-known art dealers. I then proceeded to follow it on its journey on foot.

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that the bracelet was in her jewel-box escaped Mrs. Thornton's mind. At all events, she forgot to return it to Lady Dawnley. I am telling you the story as Mrs. Thornton told it to me. Of course, it was quite likely that she should forget."

"Of course," I said.

"Not long after the wedding, some of Mrs. Thornton's jewels were stolen. She must have thought that Lady Dawnley's bracelet was among them, if she thought of it at all. Otherwise, when Lady Dawnley returned from abroad, she would have returned it at once."

"Without doubt," I agreed.

"But, you see, after her marriage, she did not see so much of Lady Dawnley. Husbands are sometimes foolishly exacting as to whom their wives should be intimate with, and wives are sometimes foolishly subservient. In this way Mrs. Thornton was not reminded of the bracelet."

"I quite see," I said, for he paused now and again, as though waiting for some expression of assent.

"After a while," he continued, "the bracelet turned up again, and Mrs. Thornton, forgetting the circumstances under which it had found its way into her jewel-case, had the setting altered to suit the fashion of the time."

He paused, so I remarked that it was very necessary to be in the fashion of the time. He looked gravely at his palette and said—

"It was very foolish to—to forget the circumstances under which it was in her jewel-case. She feels now that it was very foolish." He paused for a moment before he continued: "Mrs. Thornton is a very charming woman."

I looked at the portrait before me and thought she must be.

"She has been a brilliant social success. Unfortunately that success has tended rather to eclipse the triumphs of Lady Dawnley. These struggles, you know, are serious things. Victory may not bring much pleasure, but defeat brings bitter disappointment. Lady Dawnley was jealous, and she was also aggrieved at what she called the desertion of her friend. She bethought herself of the bracelet. Perhaps the picture at the Academy reminded her of it. At all events, she recognised it there in its altered state. Rather more than a week ago she came to see Mrs. Thornton. She spoke of the portrait at the Academy, and hinted that the bracelet reminded her of one she once had. Mrs. Thornton was confused, and

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THE FOREIGN OFFICE AN

By Ernest E.

Author of "The Imperial Heritage," "Made i
"The Foreigner in

Note.—I wish at the commencement of each of these articles to remove a possible cause of misapprehension. It is necessary, in the course of them, to say hard things of members of the present Government; but that is because the present Government has been in office for a number of years beyond which, in order to keep the illustrations of bureaucratic methods up to date, it has not been thought desirable to travel. Criticisms involving the acts of Ministers are not to be interpreted as in any sense a party attack, and it is not suggested that had the Opposition been in office, its members would have done better.—E. E. W.

"THE whole scale of salaries paid by Great Britain to its public officials is higher than that paid by any other country." Thus the Royal Commission on Civil Establishments in its Fourth Report, issued in 1890.

So, not only, as we have previously seen, are our Civil servants in the enjoyment of a system of pensions which places them in a better position than anyone else in this country, but they are also paid at a higher rate than similar officials in other countries. It would occupy too much space to examine in detail the salaries paid throughout the Civil Service, and we must therefore select examples. Let us, then, look at

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higher than can be earned outside the Service. I don't wish to speak disparagingly of Foreign Office clerks; but I think these gentlemen would themselves be the last to claim that, as a body, they are exceptionally endowed beyond their fellows. There is nothing particularly difficult about their work, which, even in the case of the higher clerks, is largely of almost a mechanical or routine character, and does not require so much application, or the exercise of so many qualities of mind and character, or so much knowledge, as are commonly demanded, say, in mercantile, legal, engineering, or journalistic work. Nor are they overweighted with responsibility. Provided they perform their duties straightforwardly, they have little to worry about, and a blunder, though it might be costly for the country, would not cost them their berths.

Before leaving the Foreign Office, there is one branch of it that seems to me to call specially for reform, as it also seemed to the Royal Commission on Civil Establishments. I refer to the Home and Foreign Service Messengers. When the Royal Commission examined into the matter, there were employed ten Foreign Service Messengers at £400 a year, with an allowance of £1 a day for travelling expenses when abroad or on duty; and five Home Service Messengers at £200, and three at £150, with travelling expenses; all these messengers, of both classes, being eligible for pensions. The Committee recommended the reduction upon fresh appointments of the scale in the case of the Foreign Service Messengers to £150 to £200, and, in the case of the Home Service Messengers, to £100 to £120. These recommendations have been almost disregarded. The 1899 Foreign Office List shows six Foreign Service Messengers at £400, and three at £250; four Home Service Messengers at £200, and four at £150.

The work of these messengers is to carry confidential documents which it is thought inadvisable to transmit by post owing to the habit of foreign Governments of opening

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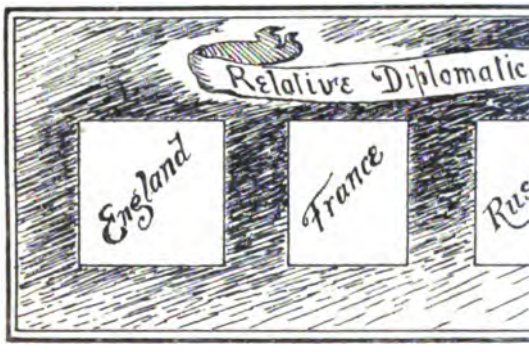
round upon an elaborate scale. As, however, they are spread about in different Votes, it is impossible to say exactly what they amount to.

Now, are these Paris expenses, for example, necessary? Sir Charles Dilke is an authority upon the Diplomatic Service, and particularly upon the Paris branch, and he told the Royal Commission that we did not need to keep so large a staff at Paris, and that with regard to the high Ambassadorial salary, the apology for which is the need for much entertaining, he declared that "French society was so broken up by political divisions that practically an Ambassador at Paris may do more harm than good by entertaining there." And this criticism applies with even more force to-day. Sir Charles Dilke also expressed his belief that in the circumstances it did not matter whether good relations were kept up between the two



countries through the French representation here or our representation at Paris, and that a popular French Ambassador here would do more good than could an English Ambassador at Paris. With regard to Embassies in general, Sir Charles Dilke was of opinion that the entertaining is excessive, as there is no object in entertaining British subjects, and there are no means of securing that the right people of the country to which the Ambassador is accredited are entertained. "In most countries now, Society has little influence upon politics, and an Ambassador and Ambassadress are naturally tempted to entertain people whom they meet and whom they like, rather than to entertain the people who have political power." Yet the system thus criticised by Sir Charles Dilke twelve years ago still remains.

Then, not only do we spend too much upon our Embassies, but we have too many Embassies. What on earth is the object of

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discuss the need for amalgamating the Customs and Inland Revenue, as well as the Foreign and Diplomatic Services; for the fusion of the Inland Revenue and Customs Departments would not issue alone in a great reduction of administrative expenditure; the abolition of the duplicate examination and the constant reference of small points to the two Boards, and of the divergence in the revenue regulations of the two Boards, would bring much saving of worry and delay and expense to the trading community.

I might bring to your notice the growing deficits in the Telegraph Department, comparing the year 1871 (when the expenditure was 57·75 per cent. of the receipts) with the year 1901 (when the estimated percentage was 110·21), and then proceed to discuss the question whether, if by internal reform and economy the Telegraph Department cannot make both ends meet, it is right that telegraph charges should be so low that the general community has to help pay for the telegrams which a part of the community sends.

Or, to turn from the waste of public money to the cognate subject of the public waste of private money, I might dwell upon the enormous and unnecessary expenditure involved in Private Bill legislation, instancing

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Her smiles are Lippi's in
Her ringlets Botticelli'
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virtues of either, but this is likely to be mere prejudice.

It is easy to recognise the chief industry of the district. Comparatively little grain is raised, and the preference is for oats rather than wheat. In every direction large herds of cows are feeding, Alderneys and Ayrshires being the predominant breeds. In smaller fields, hedged with stone dykes, the bulls graze by themselves at certain

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"The fields are full of plovers, besides gulls and other

seasons of the year, and the stroller is well advised to give these fields a wide berth. If he meet one, let him stay no longer than is necessary, for in this case the value of discretion is not easily overestimated, and few of the farmers would care to face their own bulls.

Dairy farming goes on all the year round in this district, and cheesemaking is carried on from March to November on many farm

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We left the rennet in the warm milk, and while we have been discussing adulteration, the chemical action has separated it into curds and whey. After a time the curd is cut with an instrument that would pass in a crowd for a garden rake's first cousin. The handle is short and the teeth are close together. The cutting is done very regularly and completely through the length and breadth of the curd, which is now reduced to pieces the size of a split pea. While the curd is cut up in the whey, and the even temperature is maintained by the hot-water tank, chemical action is deciding the fate of the cheese. At a certain moment it will be ready for treatment, and when the moment comes round, there must be no delay. Anticipate it by five minutes, and your cheese is not worth moulding; pass the moment by even a short time, and you have another case of labour lost. There are a few mechanical ways of finding out, but the finest Cheddar cheeses are made by the men who have an instinct for the right moment and do not err in their judgment once in a score of times. One of the devices of the unskilled is rather curious. A poker or piece of iron is heated in the stove until it has all the heat that can come without change of colour. A piece of the cheese curd is taken from the vat, squeezed nearly dry, then put lightly upon the iron and quickly yet carefully withdrawn. If it leaves on the iron tiny downy threads like very fine wool, the curd is ready; if, on the other hand, it leaves comparatively thick threads, the time for further development has not arrived.

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cheese is taken from the mould wrapped in bandages and raised by machinery to the store-rooms on the upper floor, put on a ledge, and left there to ripen. Twice a day it is turned, and the turning is a delicate operation, accomplished with ease by a man of moderate strength who understands the trick, and quickly tiring the novice who relies upon brute force. Some farms have reversible stands for the cheeses, and the workers have but to turn a lever.

In a very few weeks the young cheese is fit to be eaten, and the country dwellers, who understand the quality and value of the food, eat it in quantities that would surprise the man from the South. In about three months a cheese is ready for the market, though many people prefer a Cheddar that has enjoyed one, two, or even three years' repose in the storage-lofts. There is a long journey, often ten miles or more in length, before the cheeses reach the railroad, and, once arrived there, they are no more than units in the vast sum of British produce that travels up or down the highways of commerce. By the time their destination is reached, the interest is over. The making of Cheddar cheeses in this wild quarter of Galloway derives its attraction from the surroundings and associations. The life is almost an ideal one for the farmer who owns the cheese and the landowners to whom the farms belong, as well as to the humblest of the assistants whose duty is to tend the cows or scrub the dairy utensils. The air is strong and invigorating, the great extent of the farm lands makes exercise universal, the necessities of life are not dear, the work is thoroughly healthy.

In one of his Oxford Lectures, delivered thirty years ago, John Ruskin observed, with the complete assurance that marks most of his utterances, that no race of men bred in the country, far from cities, ever enjoys landscape, and that a peasant cannot see the beauty of cattle. If he is right—I cannot recall the proof of the statement—the people of Wigtonshire are to be pitied, for the charm of their landscapes is exquisite, and the cattle are very beautiful. Some refutation of Mr. Ruskin's statement is to be

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he cannot look his fellows in their grubby little faces if convicted of owning an adult relative guilty in dress of the most trifling solecism. Knowing that he would be expected to take his uncle about, Max had anticipated his arrival with some dismay. Coming from the Colonies, it was likely that the visitor would dress unconventionally. Max was not disposed to condemn him for this, but he doubted if he could persuade his schoolfellows to take the same tolerant view. He made the attempt, however, and succeeded beyond his hopes. In a Colonial the boys thought this free-and-easiness characteristic and praiseworthy.

"I dare say Uncle Dick won't ever wear decent hats or gloves."

"And why should he?"

"Perhaps," said Max, anxious whilst his friends were in this complacent mood to get them committed irrevocably, "perhaps he won't even wear a collar."

"That is the sort of man England wants."

"I dare say," said Max, "he may not be quite so clean as some of your uncles."

He was relieved to find that even this trait would be counted for righteousness. The modern craze for washing could so easily be overdone. Max breathed more freely. It was scarcely possible that in slovenliness his uncle could go beyond what had been thus condoned in advance. But the boys did more. They made a hero of the unknown, and Tyrell's uncle became a type to them of all that was freest and best in Colonial manhood.

"That would not suit Tyrell's uncle," they would say, when they saw a man over-dressed.

They wanted to hear how such an ideal being earned his bread. Max kept to generalities. Riding about the bush in stained riding-breeches and a flannel shirt seemed the principal thing. If he had suggested a bank or an office, his schoolfellows would have lynched him.

Until he saw his uncle, Max did not realise how he had allowed the legend to grow. Now he saw it in a flash, and the ridicule he must suffer when the boys learned that it had no foundation. He would keep the truth from them if he could, but even at that it was maddening to think that the irreproachable had arrived, the relation he had been seeking for years, and that, owing to his own foolish tongue, the paragon must be concealed like an over-stout aunt.

Walter, too, was vexed with his uncle, but

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Richard Stoneman was completely mystified.

Having a criminal relative was less of an advantage than one would have thought; and as Walter became fond of his uncle, he felt more keenly the peril of his position. In dreams he used to see him handcuffed and led away. But this catastrophe should not happen for lack of local knowledge. Persistently but unobtrusively he was preparing the man for the evil day. In this he was helped by the fact that Uncle Dick showed a preference for his society, mentally associating Max with dull walks, owing to the fact that the elder boy kept him to back streets, where there was small likelihood of their meeting the fellows. Walter was more catholic. Byways must be investigated if one was to know now how to baffle a hue and cry, but great thoroughfares had their uses also. Particularly was Walter careful to point out the big shops that had entrances in two streets, and to show how these might be used for shaking off a spy. Starting for a walk, he liked to do so by the back garden, and then down the little lane, and he made his uncle observe how by trespassing across a strip of nursery garden one could reach the Heath, a splendid means of escape supposing the police had come for one by the front door.

Mr. Stoneman thought that his nephew's mind must be unsettled by bad books, and he tried to give him juster ideas.

"You talk about nothing but escaping from the police. Are you thinking of becoming a thief?"

Walter saw a chance of driving home a moral.

"Thieves," he said, "are no worse than bushrangers."

"Bushrangers! I can tell you something about them. They are the wickedest and most miserable creatures upon God's earth."

His self-condemnation was terrible to witness.

"A bushranger can do a lot of good," said Claude, who had just joined them, "if he only robs banks and things, and gives money for rent to widows, so that they won't be turned out of their houses."

"Do shut up, Claude. You know nothing whatever about it."

"Why, you told me that yourself, Walter. The best bushrangers do it, anyway, and they risk their lives to save ladies from insult."

"Oh, Claude! you don't know what harm you are doing."

"I know exactly what it is. You want to keep uncle all to yourself, and you don't

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sooner or later," he said, and went on planting seeds.

"Oh, don't delay, uncle! Get away while it is still possible—out by the back, the way I showed you."

"So I am to give them the slip, eh? Well, it doesn't seem a bad notion. Tell Mary when the man comes, to keep him waiting a bit, and I will get out into the lane. Then she can say truthfully that I am not at home."

"Oh, uncle, do go this very minute!"

"Why, he may not come for an hour, and I shall miss my tea. No, thank you."

It was with just such nonchalance that "Lieutenant Limelight" had faced his perils, but Walter was not pleased. He stamped with impatience. He was learning that the same things affect one differently in books and in real life. Mr. Stoneman would not be bustled; and when the tea-bell rang, he went in and began what promised to be a hearty meal.

But in the middle, a strange knock came at the front door. Mr. Stoneman whispered a word to the maid and slipped out. He was gone without a word of farewell, and they might never see him again!

The knock was repeated four times before the door was opened, and then the servant was some time before she returned. She brought a letter with her.

"If you please, ma'am, it was a gentleman for Mr. Stoneman. I told him Mr. Stoneman was out, and he left this note."

"Is the coast clear?" said a voice at the door, and Mr. Stoneman entered.

"Oh! why didn't you get clear away?" said Walter. "They will come back."

"That is just what this note says; and when they come, I must see them."

"You won't let yourself be taken?" cried Walter.

"It is a bore, but it has happened to me before."

Walter put his face down on the tablecloth and sobbed.

"Perhaps, Dick," said Mrs. Tyrell a little sharply, "you will explain what all this means?"

"I will explain my own share, Annie, willingly; but I have not the least notion why Walter should cry."

"Of course, it is hardest on me," said Max.

"What I do know," said Uncle Dick, "is that *Soft Things* has been told I am in England, and the editor says I must be interviewed."

"Why?"

"Because I am the winner of their mammoth prize."

"I know," said Walter, looking up and smiling through his tears; "the top-hat prize."

"Yes; Walter knew it from the first, and very well he kept the secret. And now for detail. Twelve months ago *Soft Things*, that now has a circulation of a million weekly, was about as obscure a journal of its kind as might be. Then it was converted into a limited company, and most of the capital raised was devoted to one huge prize—I suppose the greatest ever offered—three thousand pounds. This was the competition. On a fixed date, six months after the first announcement, the directors would appoint a new editor, no indication of their choice being given until the appointment was actually made. The lucky journalist himself would be entirely taken by surprise. His first duty in his new position would be to go down Regent Street and buy himself a silk hat in the latest fashion. He would return to the office, and the new hat would then be filled to the brim with hairpins. These would be counted in the presence of a bishop and a music-hall proprietor, and the competitor who had guessed nearest to the number would receive three thousand pounds. I was the lucky man."

"Do you mean that you gained three thousand pounds?"

"Well, not quite. I ought to have mentioned that the number of guesses one might make was unlimited, but each must be accompanied by a coupon cut from *Soft Things*. I happened to have ten pounds by me. It was all the savings I possessed, and——"

"Dick, don't tell me that you bought twenty-four hundred copies."

"Not twenty-four hundred, certainly. You see, experimenting cost something. You must deduct what I spent on hairpins and old hats."

"And did they pay up?"

"Like princes. But I had to send my photograph for publication, and it was by this that your son's schoolfellow recognised me. By the way, Walter, they don't mention anything about another photograph. You said they wanted to take me."

"That was a mistake," said Walter hastily.

"But why," said Mrs. Tyrell, "have you kept it such a secret from us?"

"Because they chaffed me in Melbourne

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"'Perhaps, Dick,' said Mrs. Tyrell a little sharply, 'you will explain what all this means?'"

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so unmercifully. But I am afraid there was another reason."

"What was that?"

"Well, I saw that you and Tom thought better of me for having made my way in the world. And now the whole murder is out."

"Well, I think it was all very silly. And so your prosperity is a pure accident?"

"You can put it that way. I like to look upon it as a reward for my faith in the directors. I made up my mind that they would need a pretty brainy man for a post like that, and based my calculations on his taking a seven and three-eighths hat. No one else that I heard of went beyond seven and a quarter."

"I expect that it was the editor himself that called," said Max. "I noticed as he was walking away that he had a very large head."

"Very probably, and that is another reason why I must be in next time he calls. He has written a pressing letter, and it would be shabby to refuse. They are preparing a series of articles entitled 'Favourites of Fortune,' and they wish me to stand for number one."

"He is opening the gate now," said Claude.

"I found this in my pocket," said Uncle Dick. "It is not mine."

He produced an envelope containing a sovereign and about fifteen shillings in silver.

"It is mine," said Walter, turning a violent red. "I slipped it into your pocket for safety."

He would sooner have lost the money than that they should know he had believed his uncle to be a hunted bushranger, and had beggared himself to help the outlaw to escape.

"It is all very well for Uncle Dick," growled Max—his uncle was away being interviewed—"he has the money, but I shall be called 'Hat,' and Walter will be called 'Hairpins,' as long as we are at the school. You don't seem to care, Walter."

"No," said Walter blithely; "I don't care a hairpin!"

When the boys were in bed that night, Uncle Dick sat up studying the back numbers of *Soft Things*. He read with a purpose. Whether it was accomplished is not known, for he said nothing. But next morning he gave Walter the mysterious postal order, and a handsome tip in addition. He never commented upon Walter's fit of weeping or upon his other strange doings; nor, in his presence, might anyone else do so. Which goes to prove that a man may be a favourite of fortune, and yet remain a thoroughly good fellow.

THE LIGHTS O' HOME.

O TWENTY ships in Bantry Bay,
Good-bye to the lights o' home:
For a lad's heart's one with the wandering wind
And ever a lad must roam;
Twenty hands mayn't stay him,
Or twenty hearts delay him,
The sails are spread in Bantry Bay,
Good-bye to the lights o' home.

Over the world to Bantry Bay,
Win home, lad, at the last:
For a man's heart's fain to anchor there
And furl the sail to the mast.
And a thousand suns mayn't blind him,
Or a thousand leagues mayn't bind him,
For the light that shines o'er Bantry Bay
Will lead him home at last.

ARTHUR KETCHUM.

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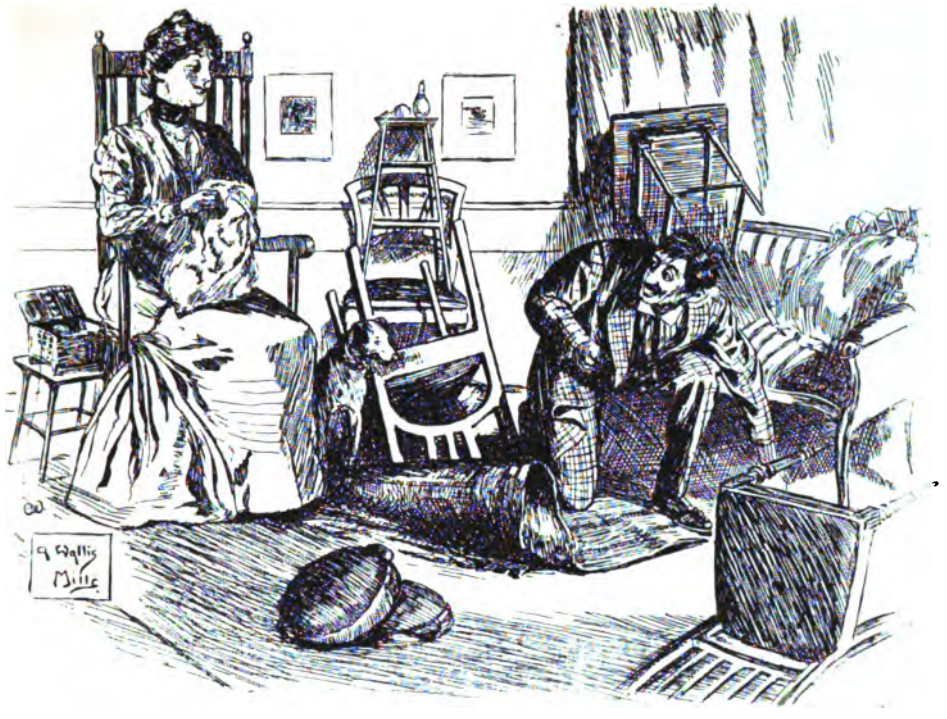

WOMAN THE CONSIDERATE.

SHE (after half an hour's fruitless search for a needle "that's somewhere on the floor"): Don't trouble any more, dear—I've found it.
HE: Found it?
SHE: Yes; here it was, caught in my work, after all. Do put the things straight again!

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

TEACHER (to Sunday-school class): And now, can you tell me what it is that we all want to make us perfectly happy?

LITTLE GIRL (aged eight): 'Usbands, teacher.

MISTRESS (to Mary Jane, who has just given notice to leave at the end of the month to be married): Would you be willing to oblige me by putting off your marriage for a week, if I am not suited when your notice expires?

MARY JANE: Well, mum, I wouldn't mind waiting myself, but men is different. If you don't nail 'em when they are ready for it, you can't nail 'em at all.

YOUNG LADY DISTRICT VISITOR (to mother of family): I hear your third son is married?

MOTHER OF FAMILY: Yes, miss, our sons marries off but our daughters is left hanging on our hands. I expect your mother finds it the same, miss.

CLERGYMAN (coming up behind inebriated parishioner, who is walking circuitously up the lane): Ah, Matthews, drunk again!

MATTHEWS (without looking round or recognising the voice): So am I.

A JUG OF CIDER.

If blue-eyed Betty hadn't dropped
The jug that held the cider,
And at the ruin stared and stopped,
Young Robin would have spied her,
And would have held the pitcher while
The dainty maiden crossed the stile.

And as along the lane they fared,
I'm sure he would have kissed her,
Then little would Miss Bet have cared
Though maid and mistress missed her,
A spark's soon fanned into a flame,
E'en while a maiden cries "For shame!"

With kisses Cupid lays his plans
(Friends, let us heed the warning),
Then Parson calls the marriage banns
Some sweet September morning.
And Betty would, as Robin's wife,
Have been contented all her life.

The jug lay broken on the stones,
Rob neither saw nor tarried,
In foreign lands he laid his bones,
And Betty never married.
Their lives were incomplete—ah, well!
And all because a pitcher fell.

Jessie Pope.

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NEIGHBOURLY CONSIDERATION.

"I DON'T like complaining to a neighbour, but your dog kept barking terribly all last night."

"Oh, thanks! But it doesn't hurt him a bit—he's used to it. Still, it's very kind of you to mention it, I'm sure."

PAT had just finished chopping the sticks for the good lady, and she, benevolent soul, had asked him whether he would prefer a cup of tea or a drop of whisky?

"Can a duck swim?" said Pat. "Sure, I'll be taking a drop of the cratur, if yer don't mind." So she fetched him a glass of whisky-and-water.

Pat tasted and seemed not very well pleased.

"Beggin' yer pardon, mum, and which did ye be after puttin' in the glass first, the whisky or the water?"

"The whisky, of course, my good man. It's proper to put the whisky in first," she replied.

"Oh! it'll be all right, thin. I'll be comin' to the whisky by and by!"

THE village curate accosted the old bred-and-born inhabitant of the place at her cottage gate.

"Good morning, Mrs. Gamp. How are you? I haven't seen you at church lately. How's that?"

"Why, sir, my rheumatics be so bad that I can't hardly walk at all," she answered.

"Oh, well, try and come on Sunday. We're having a special service for fine weather; and when we get that, you know, your rheumatics will soon disappear."

"Maybe they will, and maybe they won't, sir; but it's no good you a-praying for fine weather while the wind is where it is," the old dame answered.

"TALK about express trains," coolly said the Yankee, "I guess we can give you a lead at that game on our side of the ocean; the last trial I saw run was between Boston and Chicago, and as the train sped through Chicago station we noticed a black streak a-coming up the line after it with the sound as of a hurricane, and this also whizzed through the station."

"What was it?" we asked, breathless.

"My frens," the Yankee said simply, "it was the shadow of the train which it had over-run!"

A PROMISE OF IMPROVEMENT.

MAMMA: Tommy, you must not shoot at pussy. You'll be knocking her eye out!

TOMMY: Very well, mamma; in future I'll only shoot at nurse!

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SUNDAY MORNING.

FIRST PITMAN: Wot's ter doin' with t' barrow o' Sunday, Bill?
SECOND PITMAN: Why, Sam's gone off with t' trip, an' t' pup's dead, an' a chap looks such a fooil goin' for a walk by hisself!

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PARTICULAR.

LITTLE Dorothy had just begun to go to Sunday-school, and had been much interested in the story of the Creation, the story of the Flood, etc., as her teacher had told them to the class.

One day, Dorothy was taken by her uncle to see the menagerie. When she came home, she told her mother all about the strange animals she had seen. She enjoyed the parrots and the funny monkeys; she called the tigers "big pussies," but the huge, homely hippopotamus had evidently made a most unfavourable impression on her youthful mind. She described it to her mother as well as she could—the huge, ugly beast with its great red mouth.

Then she was silent a few minutes, thinking matters over in her small mind. Dorothy usually had quite decided opinions of her own.

Suddenly she asked: "Mamma, did God make *everything*? Did He make *all* the animals?"

"Yes, dear," replied her mother.

"Did He—did He make the—*hippopotamus*, mamma?"

"Yes, dear."

"Well," said Dorothy, in a tone of great decision, giving her yellow curls a toss, "then I'm not going to Sunday-school any more!"—*Woman's Home Companion, U.S.A.*

AN EXCEPTION.

She'd won no prize at any school,
She'd taken no degree at college,
A sweet exception to the rule,
She was the woman *without* knowledge.

And hence she proved a Mecca-stone
To pilgrim men, oppressed and dreary,
By too much smartness overthrown,
Of learning, wit, and wisdom weary.

They crowded round her 'mid the whirl,
While brilliancy sat by, unheeded—
Each man rejoiced to find a girl
Who did not know as much as he did.

Madeline Bridges.

A POINT OF PEDIGREE.

"In me own counthry, miss, me ancesthors were kings."
"Indeed! I don't remember any named Harrigan."
"Shure, miss, it was me ancesthress. Misthress Kat'erine O'Harrigan, as married Henry the Eighth, who broke her heart by divorcing the poor lady!

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